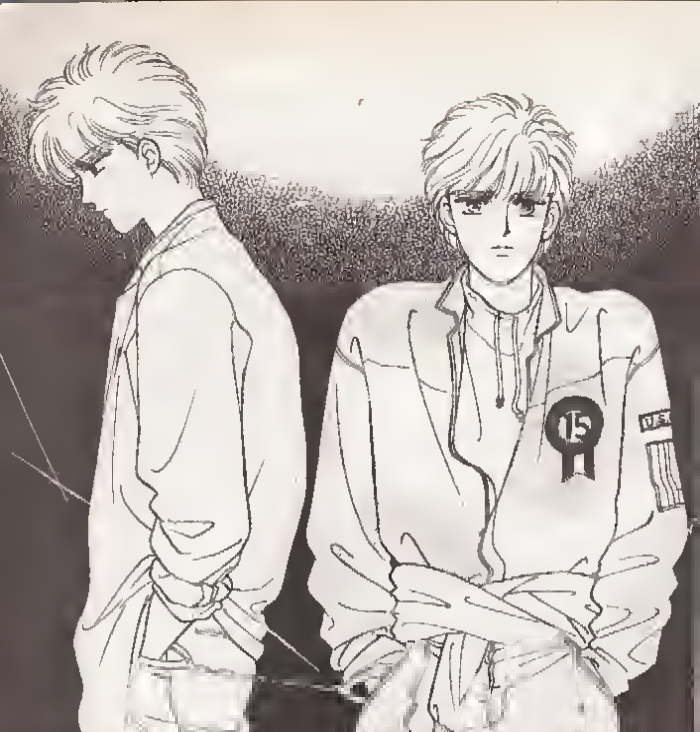

CIPHER

Volume 7

By Minako Narita

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WHO'S WHO IN CIPHER

Siva & Cipher

Siva (Jake) & Cipher (Roy): identical twin brothers made famous by their childhood acting success. They used to share not just a face, but also a single identity. Now that Cipher has moved away to Los Angeles, it's time for the twins to come into their own.

Anise

Schoolmate and good friend of Siva (Jake) and Cipher (Roy). She was on the verge of taking her relationship with Cipher to a romantic level but it didn't quite work out. Now she has to adjust to Cipher being completely gone from her life and finds herself in the role of watching over his brother.

The Story So Far

Siva (Jake) met a girl named Dana Jackson. Coincidentally, she happened to be the lead actress in a movie with Cipher (Roy), who was acting as "Siva." Dana assumed that she was spending both her professional and personal time with Siva and developed strong feelings for him. At the same time, Siva wanted to have an actual relationship with Dana, but it was now complicated by the nature of the twins' deception.

Dana's mother quickly grew suspicious. Out of guilt and his concern for Dana, Siva revealed the entire story of their lives to Mrs. Jackson, something he hadn't even shared with Anise. Mrs. Jackson decided to leave it up to Cipher to tell the truth to Dana instead of telling her daughter herself. By this time, Cipher found he was also developing feelings for her. While the twins argued over the timing of their confession, fate took a tragic turn. Dana was killed in a car accident.

Cipher felt a terrible guilt about putting his own interests ahead of Siva's feelings. Despondent, he decided it was now time to finally make a change. He left New York for Los Angeles to pursue an independent career under his real name. During a tearful departure from Anise, he asked her to look out for his brother while he was gone.

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ANISE...
THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO FOR YOU, OR FOR JAKE.
I'M SO ASHAMED AND ANGRY WITH MYSELF FOR BEING SO HELPLESS.
I'M GLAD YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT ME BUT, I'M OKAY. I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN.
TAKE CARE OF JAKE AND BE HAPPY.
GOOD-BYE.

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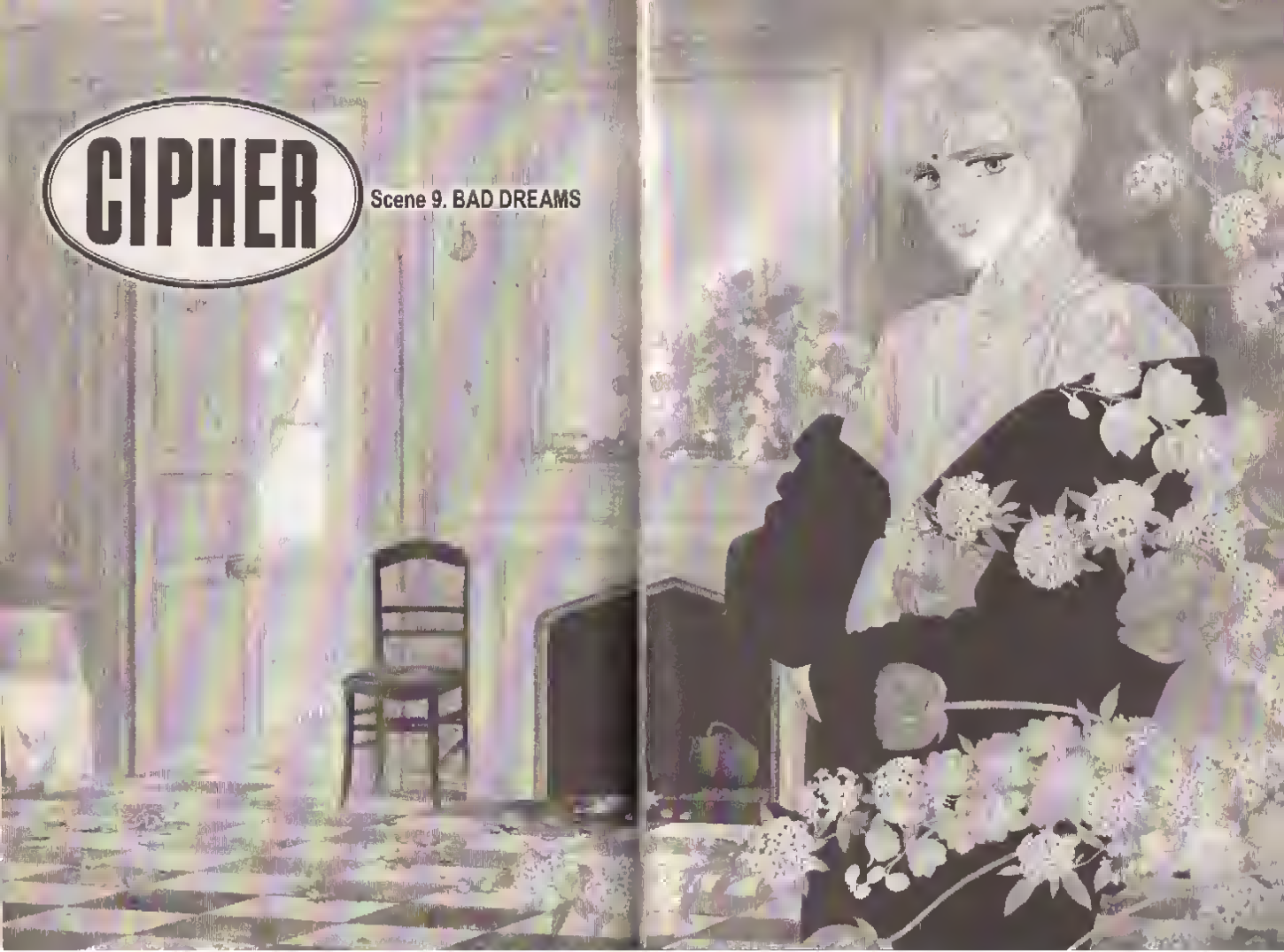

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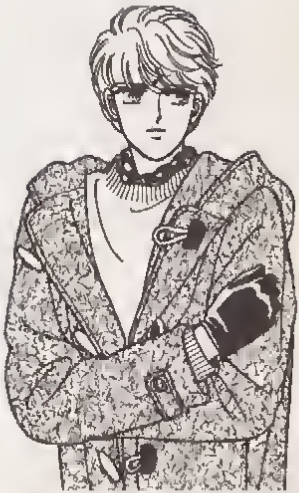

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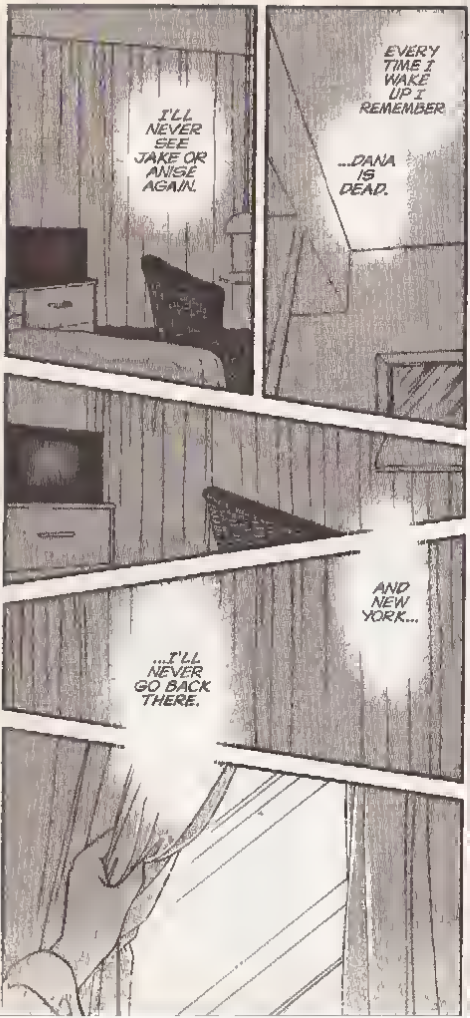
I'LL NEVER SEE JAKE OR ANISE AGAIN.
EVERY TIME I WAKE UP I REMEMBER
...DANA IS DEAD.
I HAVE BAD DREAMS EVERY NIGHT.
AND NEW YORK...
...I'LL NEVER GO BACK THERE.

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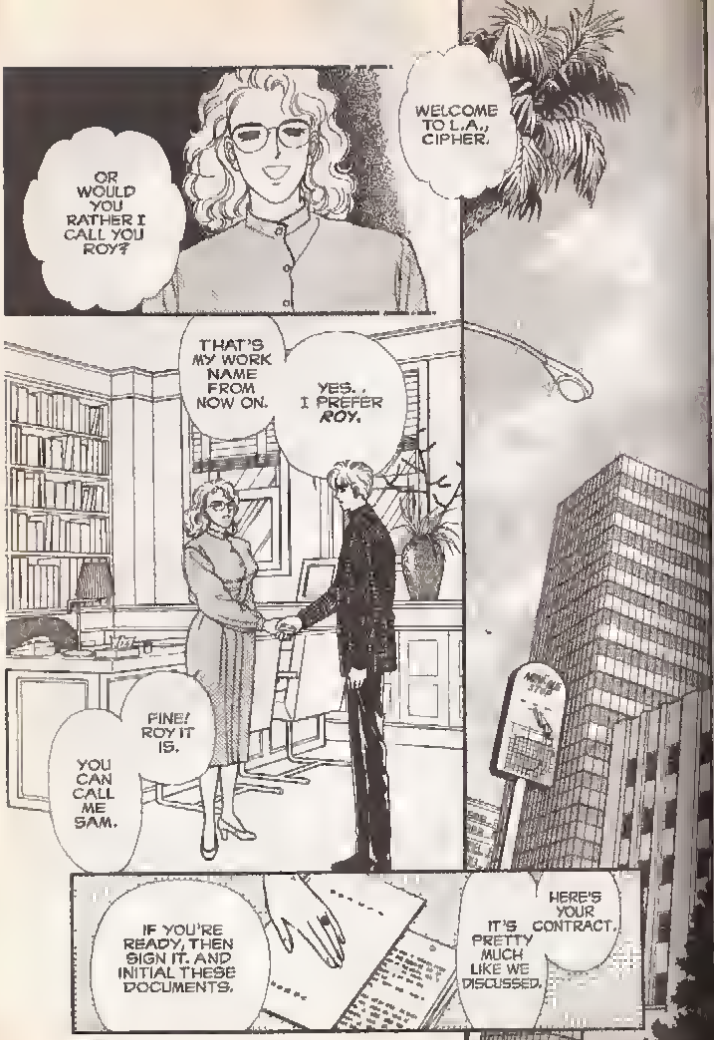
WELCOME TO L.A., CIPHER.
OR WOULD YOU RATHER I CALL YOU ROY?
YES. I PREFER ROY.
THAT'S MY WORK NAME FROM NOW ON.
FINE! ROY IT IS.
YOU CAN CALL ME SAM.
IF YOU'RE READY, THEN SIGN IT. AND INITIAL THESE DOCUMENTS.
IT'S PRETTY MUCH LIKE WE DISCUSSED.
HERE'S YOUR CONTRACT.

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IF YOU WANT TO RENT, HOW ABOUT SHARING AN APARTMENT?
OF COURSE!
IT'LL BE HARD TO FIND A PLACE DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.
YEAH.
I STILL DON'T HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE YET.
HM ...
CAN I ADD MY ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER LATER?
I'VE NEVER LIVED WITH ANYBODY BUT JAKE.
YOU MEAN ... ...A ROOM-MATE?
AND RENT HERE ISN'T CHEAP.
IT WILL HELP YOU GET TO KNOW THE TOWN BETTER.

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MAYBE IT MEANS THERE'S NO GUARANTEE I'LL MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO LIVE ALONE.
IS THAT IT?
I WONDER WHY SHE'S PUSHING IT SO HARD.
IF YOU WANT A ROOMMATE YOUR OWN AGE, YOU CAN TRY A COLLEGE BULLETIN BOARD.
DING DONG
PERSONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS
RAMBLES TO SHARE
BASS PLAYER WANTED
P.O. BOXES
WESTWOOD VILLAGE
DING DONG
DING DONG

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RENTALS to SHARE
RENTALS to SHARE
Rip
HELLO?
I SAW YOUR AD FOR A ROOMMATE
YEAH. WHY DON'T YOU COME TAKE A LOOK AT IT ON SUNDAY?
KNOW WHERE IT IS?
I THINK SO.
I'LL BE THERE AROUND TWO O'CLOCK

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MARCH 3, 1988. THANKS TO EVERYBODY WHO GAVE THE "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" INTO THE CHAKICHAKI HOUSE ANSWERING MACHINE! IT MADE ME SOOO HAPPY!!
BY THE WAY CHAKICHAKI HOUSE IS THE MANGA INFORMATION PHONE LINE MY COUSIN (AND ROOMMATE) RUNS AS A HOBBY. PLEASE CALL AND LEAVE A MESSAGE.
CHAK CHAK
YOU'LL SEE TWIN PALM TREES IN FRONT OF MY HOME
BYE.
CLICK
CATTIE PUUR
CUT THAT OUT!
IF YOU HAVE ANY MESSAGES FOR ME SHE'LL TRY TO PASS THEM ALONG (THOUGH WE LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSE WE DON'T MEET OFTEN). GIVE IT A TRY IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT
CHK EDITOR NOTE WRITTEN IN 1988) THIS PHONE LINE IS NO LONGER IN SERVICE
WITH TERRENCE TRENT D'ARBY AND CAMEO PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND, I'VE GOTTEN BACK TO DRAWING THIS SERIES AGAIN! LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL IN VOLUME 8!
MARCH 28 1988 MIWAKO
A HOME...
I'VE GOT TO GIVE UP THINKING THAT "MY HOME IS ON THE SCREEN."

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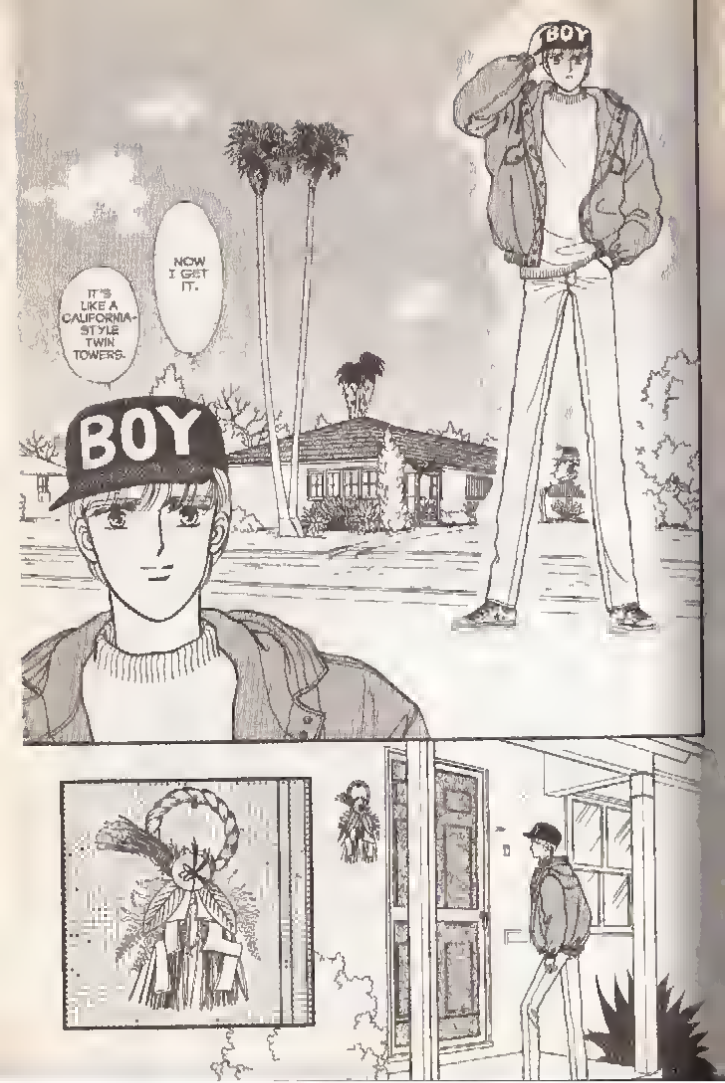

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BWA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
GU
P
MY FAMILY IS JAPANESE.
THAT'S SORT OF A JAPANESE NEW YEAR'S WREATH.
JAPANESE! THAT EXPLAINS IT!
OY
IT LOOKS LIKE A SUMO WRESTLER'S OUTFIT!
ANYWAY, HAVE A SEAT!
IT'S A LITTLE MESSY, BUT YOU CAN FIND A SPOT.
YEAH, IT DOES LOOK LIKE THAT.
YOU GOT SOME FUNNY IDEAS.
HEE HEE HEE HEE

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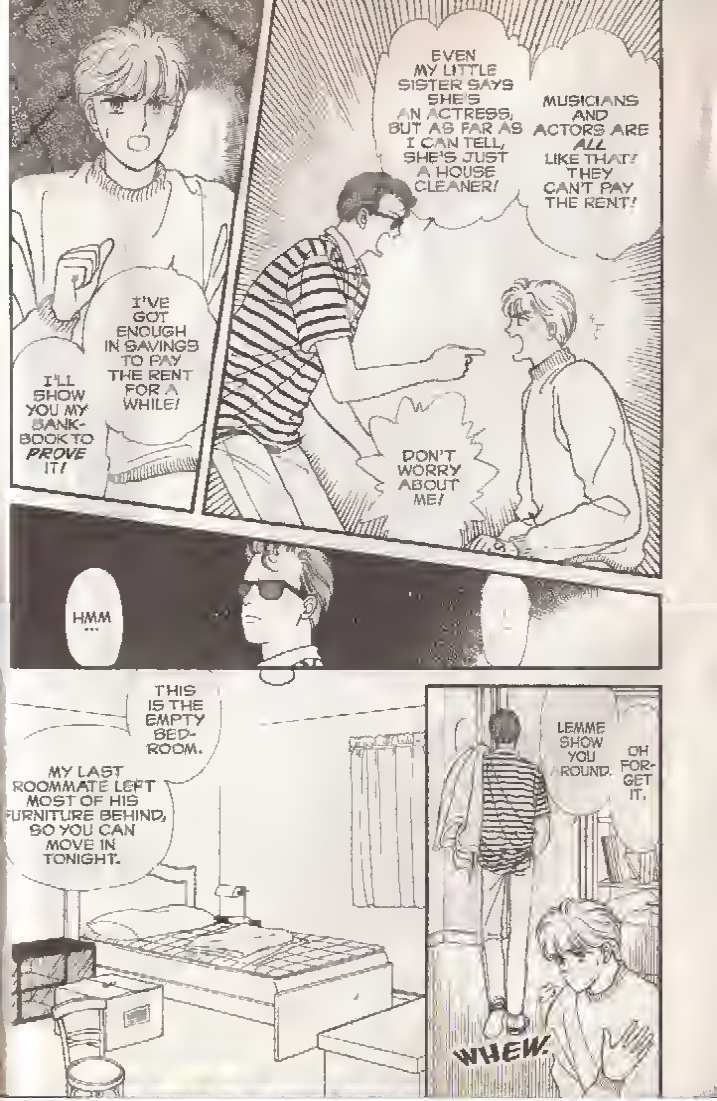
I'LL SHOW YOU MY BANK-BOOK TO PROVE IT!
I'VE GOT ENOUGH IN SAVINGS TO PAY THE RENT FOR A WHILE!
EVEN MY LITTLE SISTER SAYS SHE'S AN ACTRESS, BUT AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, SHE'S JUST A HOUSE CLEANER!
MUSICIANS AND ACTORS ARE ALL LIKE THAT! THEY CAN'T PAY THE RENT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!
HMM ...
THIS IS THE EMPTY BED-ROOM.
MY LAST ROOMMATE LEFT MOST OF HIS FURNITURE BEHIND, SO YOU CAN MOVE IN TONIGHT.
LEMME SHOW YOU AROUND.
OH FOR-GET IT.
WHEW

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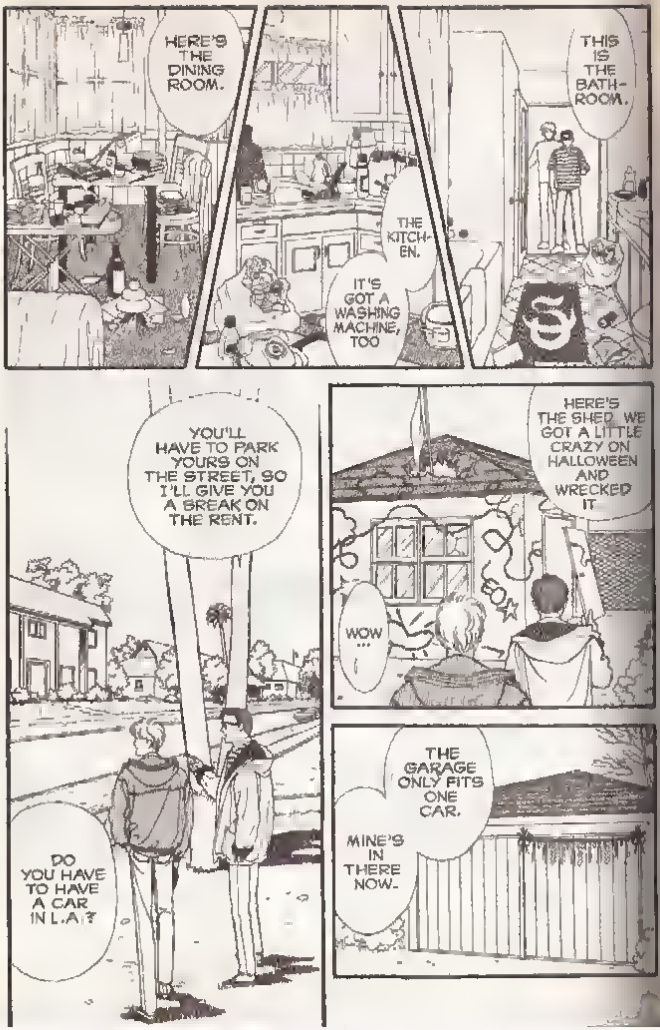
HERE'S THE DINING ROOM.
THE KITCHEN.
IT'S GOT A WASHING MACHINE, TOO
THIS IS THE BATHROOM.
YOU'LL HAVE TO PARK YOURS ON THE STREET, SO I'LL GIVE YOU A BREAK ON THE RENT.
DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE A CAR IN L.A.?
HERE'S THE SHED. WE GOT A LITTLE CRAZY ON HALLOWEEN AND WRECKED IT.
WOW ...
THE GARAGE ONLY FITS ONE CAR.
MINE'S IN THERE NOW.

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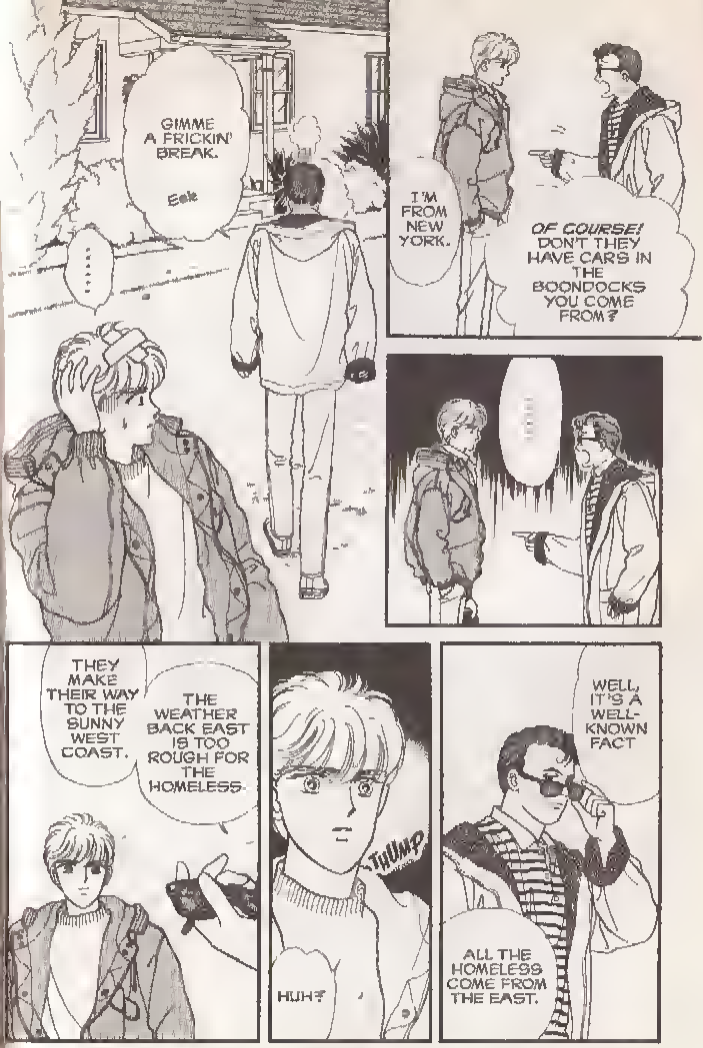
GIMME A FRICKIN' BREAK.
Eek
I'M FROM NEW YORK.
OF COURSE! DON'T THEY HAVE CARS IN THE BOONDOCKS YOU COME FROM?
THEY MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE SUNNY WEST COAST.
THE WEATHER BACK EAST IS TOO ROUGH FOR THE HOMELESS.
THUMP
HUH?
WELL, IT'S A WELL-KNOWN FACT
ALL THE HOMELESS COME FROM THE EAST.

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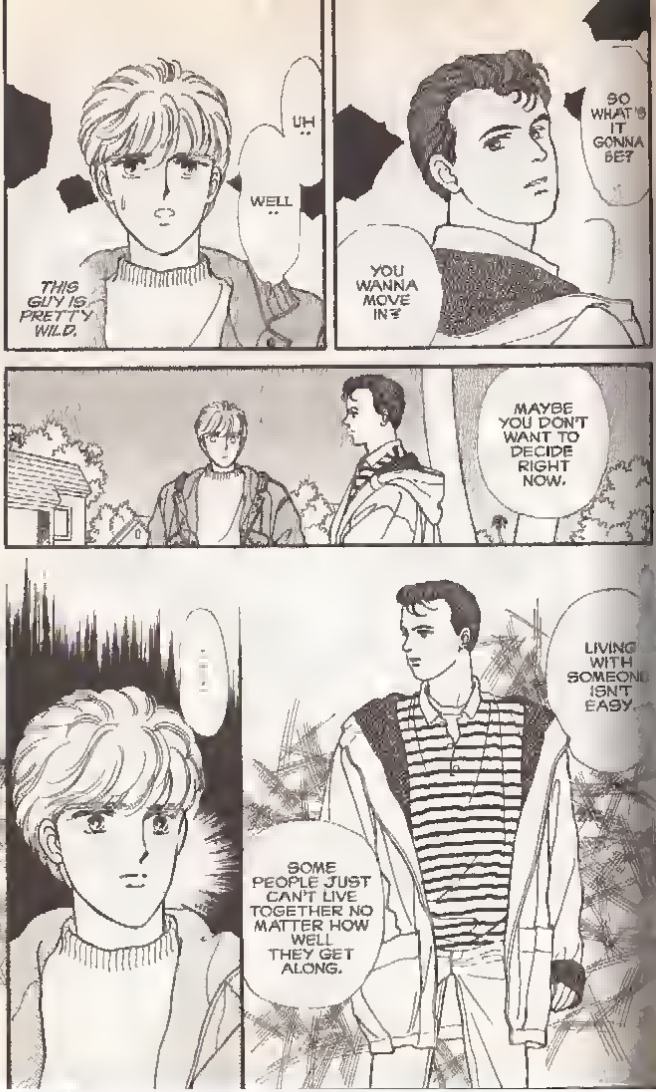
THIS GUY IS PRETTY WILD.
UH..
WELL..
YOU WANNA MOVE IN?
SO WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?
MAYBE YOU DON'T WANT TO DECIDE RIGHT NOW.
SOME PEOPLE JUST CAN'T LIVE TOGETHER NO MATTER HOW WELL THEY GET ALONG.
LIVING WITH SOMEONE ISN'T EASY.

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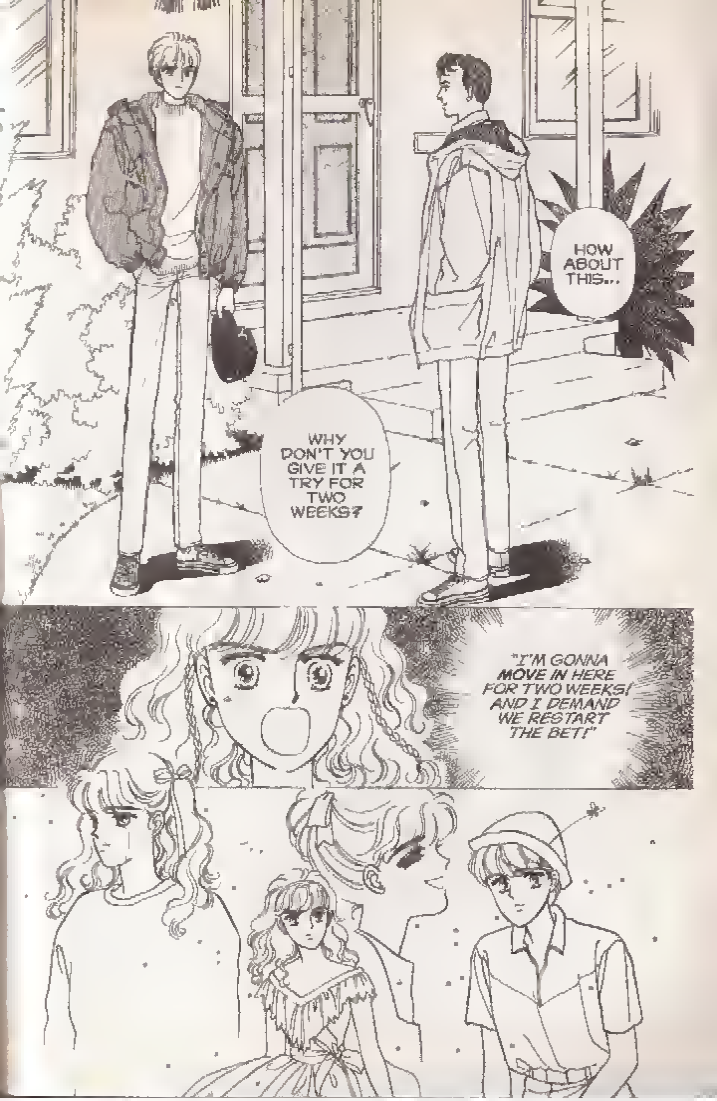

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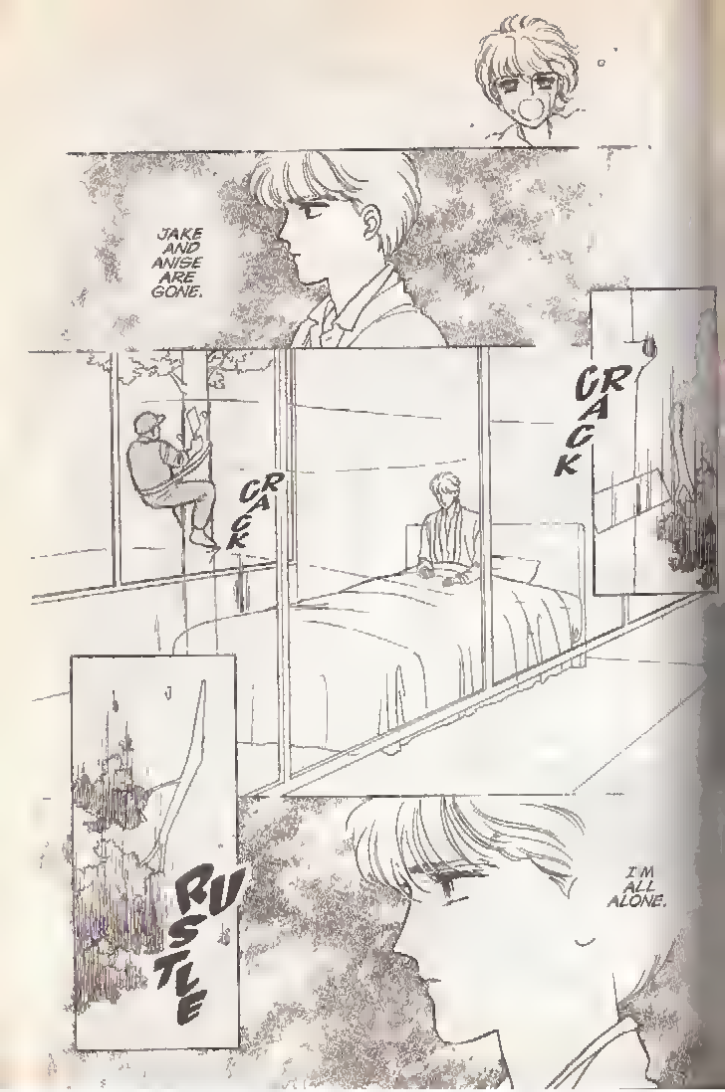

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♪ DA CHIKA DA CHIKA DA CHIKA ♪
HEY.
SORRY. DID I WAKE YOU?
HAL?
IS YOUR MAJOR MUSIC OR COMPU-TERS?
NEITHER ARCHI-TECTURE.
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF HOBBIES

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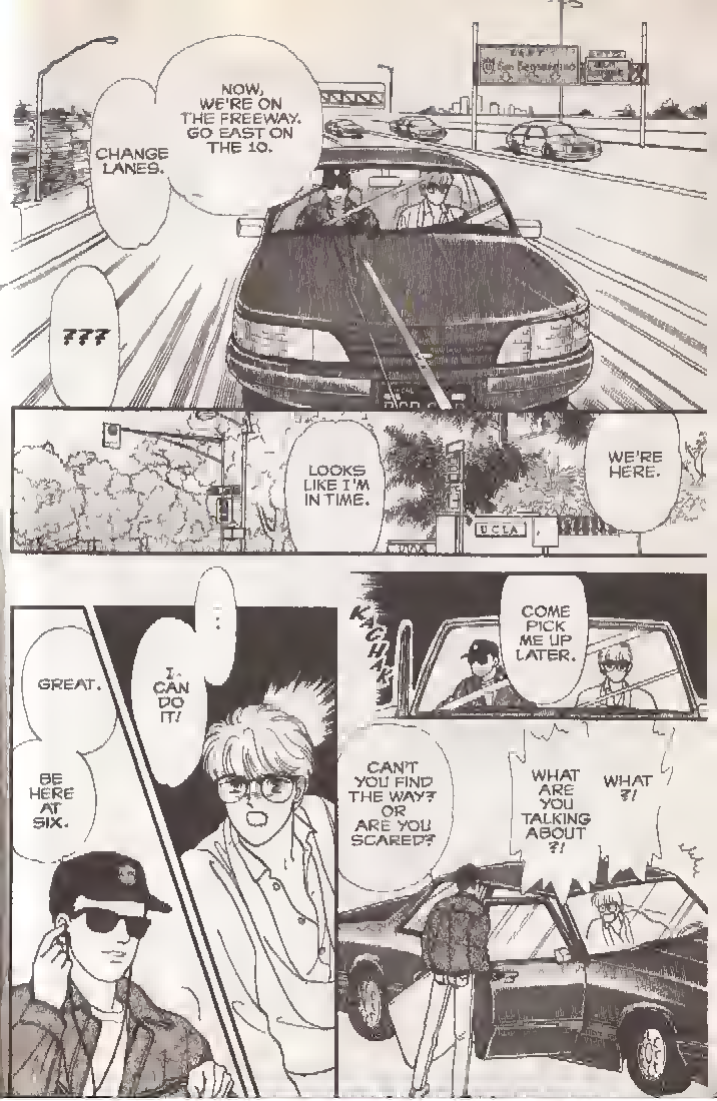

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HE CAN'T FIND ANYBODY WHO'LL PUT UP WITH HIM. DID HE LOWER THE RENT FOR YOU?
IT'S HARD TO LIVE WITH HIM
HE'S EITHER A GENIUS OR INSANE.
OH NO!
God, he hasn't washed his face.
Bathroom.
PAJAMAS
UH... THANKS.
YOU'LL NEED IT.
GOOD LUCK, PAL.
CARE-FUL. HE CAN HEAR YOU.
SNICKER
THINK HE'LL BE OKAY?
AH

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...BECAUSE EXCEPT FOR RECENTLY, I WAS ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT HIM.
IT'S SO NOTICE-ABLE...
ROY? GOOD MORNING. IT'S SAM.
DID I WAKE YOU?
HELLO?
RING
GOT SOME-THING FOR ME?
OH, GOOD MORNING!
ON THE TENTH, AT ONE O'CLOCK
ALL RIGHT. I'LL GIVE IT A TRY.
THANKS
I NEED YOU TO COME IN AND AUDITION.
YES. A T.V. DRAMA.

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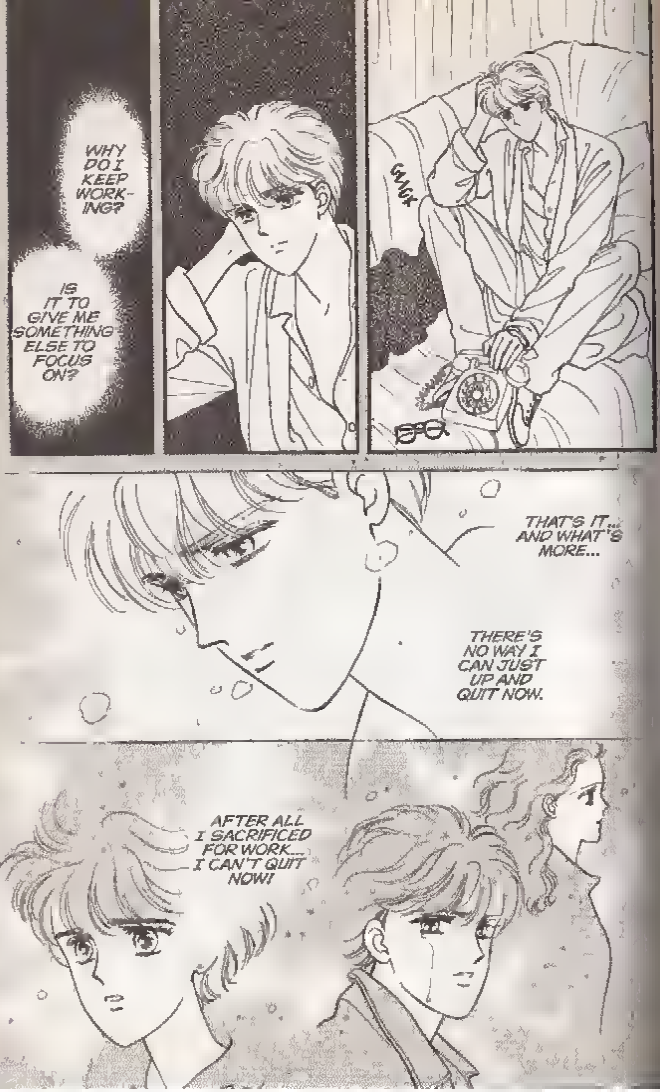
WHY DO I KEEP WORK-ING?
IS IT TO GIVE ME SOMETHING ELSE TO FOCUS ON?
GASP
THAT'S IT... AND WHAT'S MORE...
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN JUST UP AND QUIT NOW.
AFTER ALL I SACRIFICED FOR WORK... I CAN'T QUIT NOW!

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I FEEL LIKE IF I DON'T KEEP BEING AN ACTOR FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, I WON'T BE FORGIVEN.
IF I KEEP ON THE STAGE UNTIL I DIE?
WILL I BE FORGIVEN THEN?

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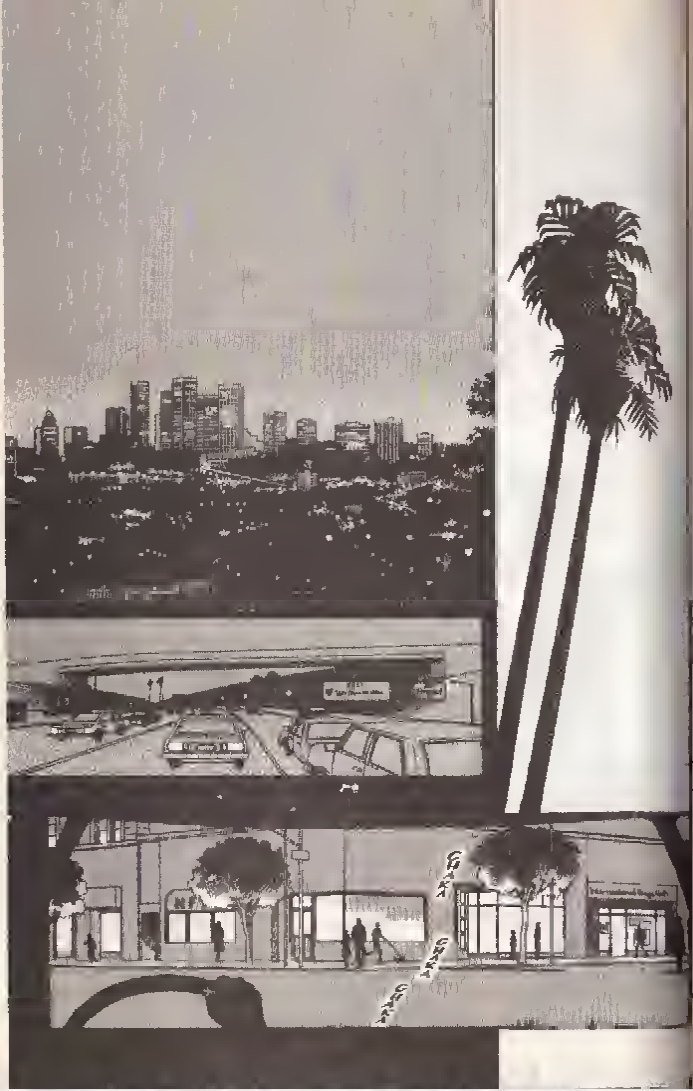

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SMIRK
HMPH.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL DO JUST FINE IN L.A.
BAM
LET'S GET SOME-THING TO EAT.
TONIGHT I'M BUYING.
HAL.
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID IF I'D GOTTEN TOTALLY LOST AND WAS LATE?
.....
MAYBE
MAYBE HE DID THIS JUST SO I CAN GET USED TO L.A.

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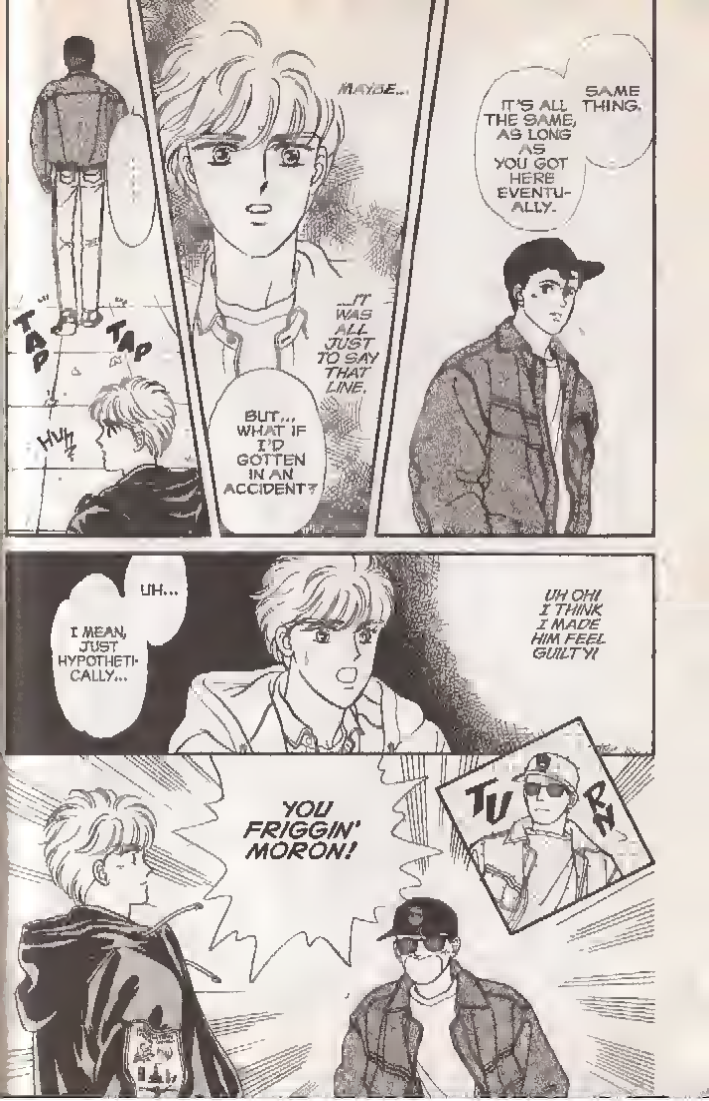
TAP TAP TAP
HUH?
MAYBE...
...IT WAS ALL JUST TO SAY THAT LINE.
BUT... WHAT IF I'D GOTTEN IN AN ACCIDENT?
IT'S ALL THE SAME, AS LONG AS YOU GOT HERE EVENTU-ALLY.
SAME THING.
UH...
I MEAN, JUST HYPOTHETI-CALLY...
UH OH! I THINK I MADE HIM FEEL GUILTY!
TURN
YOU FRIGGIN' MORON!

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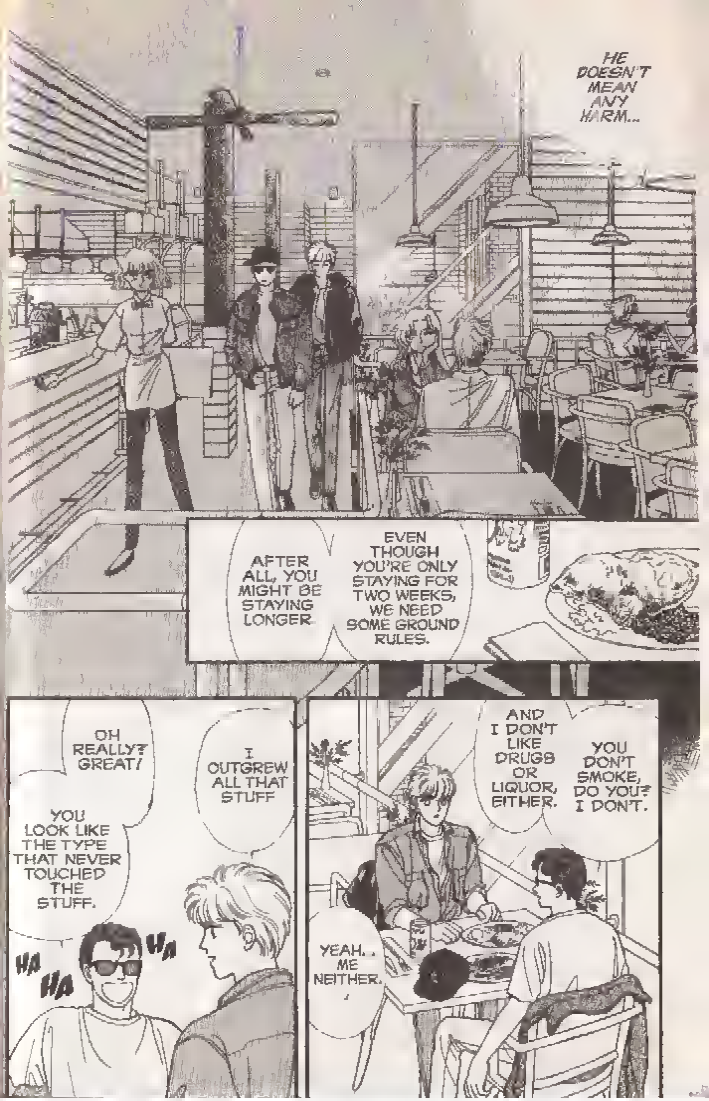
HE DOESN'T MEAN ANY HARM...
AFTER ALL, YOU MIGHT BE STAYING LONGER.
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE ONLY STAYING FOR TWO WEEKS, WE NEED SOME GROUND RULES.
OH REALLY? GREAT!
I OUTGREW ALL THAT STUFF
YOU LOOK LIKE THE TYPE THAT NEVER TOUCHED THE STUFF.
HA HA HA
AND I DON'T LIKE DRUGS OR LIQUOR, EITHER.
YOU DON'T SMOKE, DO YOU? I DON'T.
YEAH.. ME NEITHER.

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IT'LL HAVE TO BE...
...A CAT!
...A DOG!
GRRR
YEAH
IF WE GET ONE...
I GUESS YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PETS **
IF YOU WANT ONE, WE'LL HAVE TO DISCUSS IT FIRST.
RIGHT.
LET'S NOT GET ONE.
WE COULD DECIDE ON GROCERIES AND HOW MANY TIMES WE EAT TOGETHER ***
...AND THEN SPLIT THE COST. HOW'S THAT SOUND?
THE HARD PART IS DECIDING ABOUT COOKING AND SHOPPING.

** It reads "I guess you don't have any pets."
*** It reads "Now then..."

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ME?
WELL ...
HAL ...
WHAT DO YOU USUALLY EAT?
GASP
THAT'LL WORK, AS LONG AS THERE'S NOT TOO MUCH DIFFERENCE IN THE THINGS AND AMOUNTS WE EAT.
OKAY.
GASP
I LIKE PASTA.
AND MEAT, TOO.
FOR LUNCH, I USUALLY HAVE A BURGER.
Glint
IN THE MORNING ...
REALLY? GREAT!
BUT WHY ARE YOU SURPRISED?
WOW... THAT'S PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS ME
I HAVE AN ENGLISH BREAKFAST.
My mother is a Brit.

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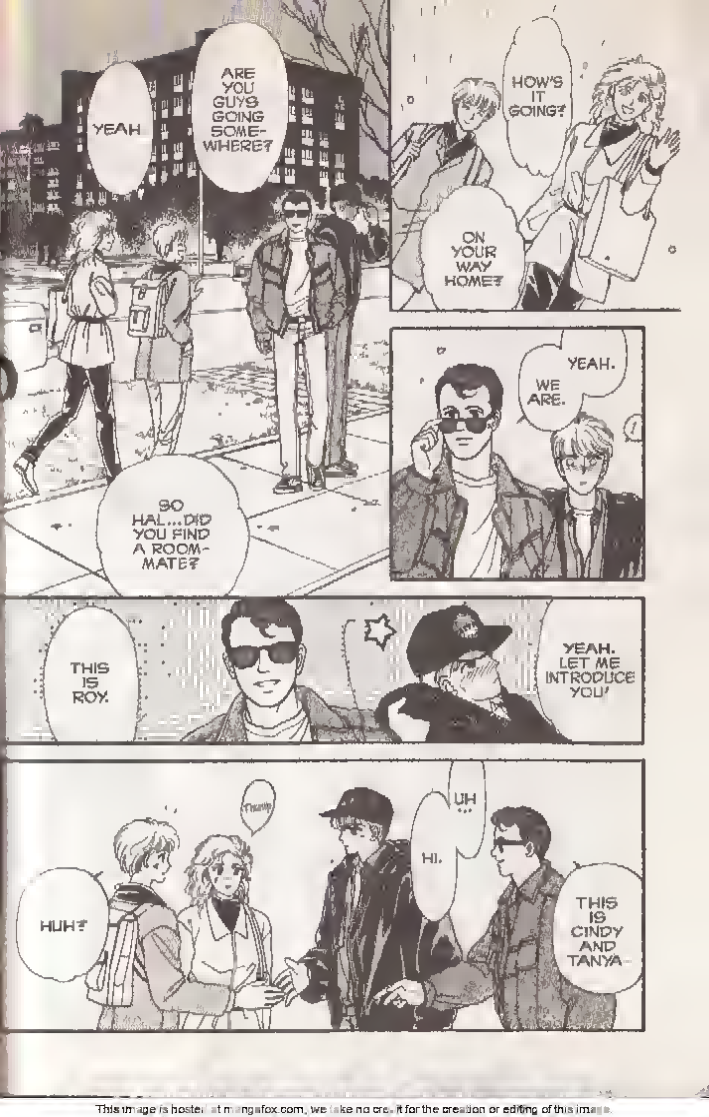

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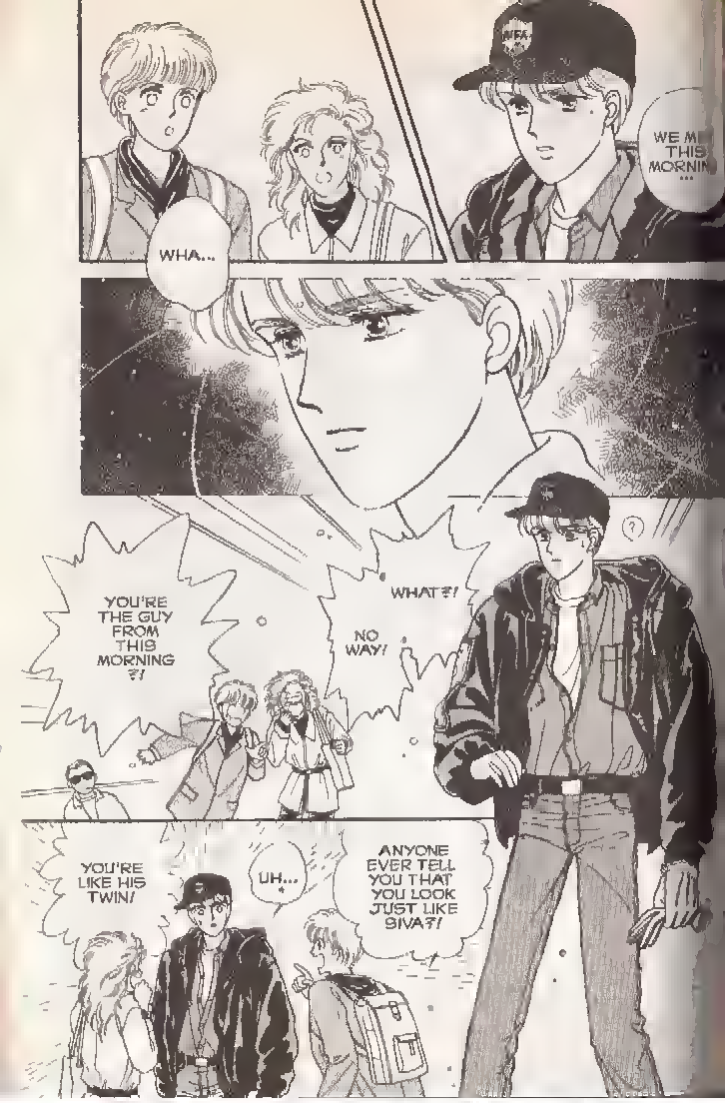

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GO, IF YOU WANT.
WELL... WE'VE GOT TO...
GOING HOME ALREADY?
WHY DON'T WE ALL GO OUT SOMEWHERE?
NO WAY! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THEY INVITED.
HAL, COME WITH US.
I DON'T NEED YOU WORRYING ABOUT ME LIKE THAT!
GO ON! GET GOING!

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NO PROB!
♪
HE DOESN'T HAVE A CAR YET YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE HIM A RIDE HOME
A NEW TOWN, NEW JOB, NEW FRIENDS.
MUFFLER SHOP
ALL THIS EXCITEMENT IS A GOOD THING.
IT'S MAKING THINGS EASIER.

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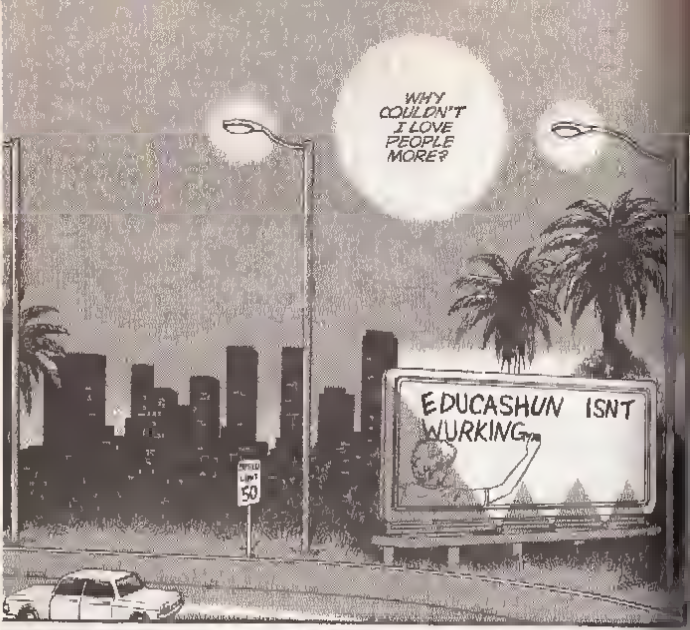

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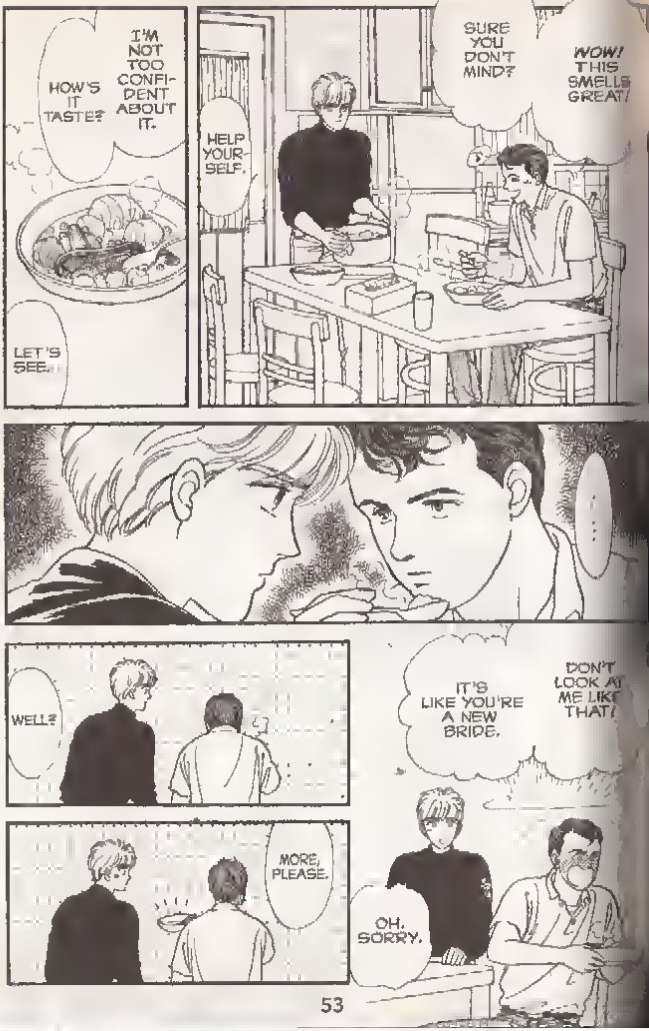

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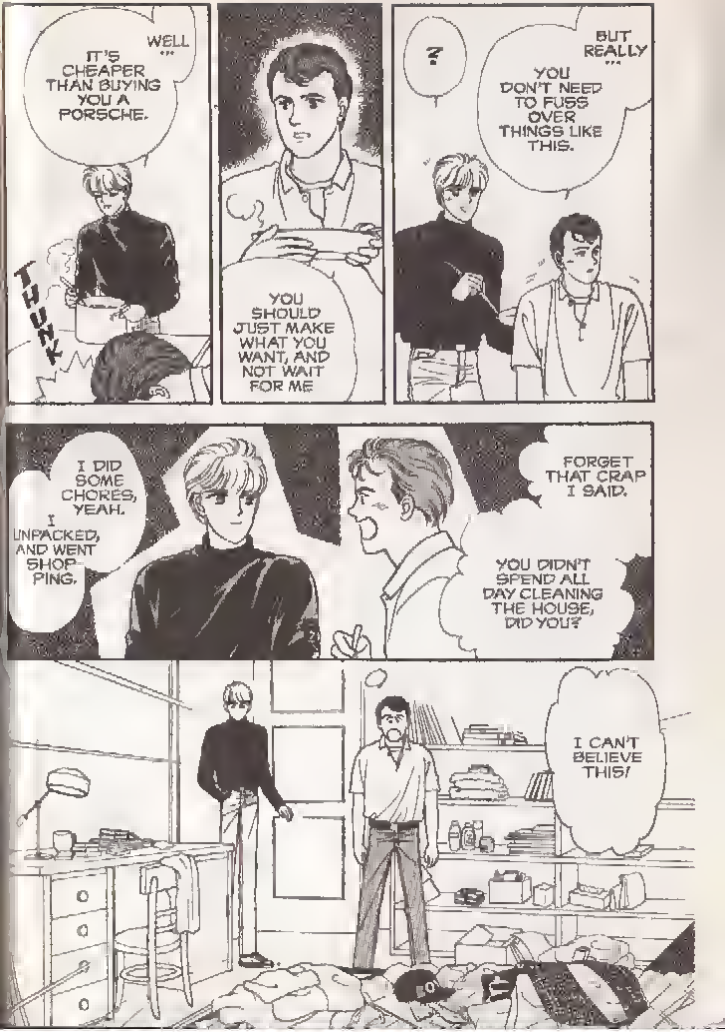
WELL ...
IT'S CHEAPER THAN BUYING YOU A PORSCHE.
TSUNK
YOU SHOULD JUST MAKE WHAT YOU WANT, AND NOT WAIT FOR ME
?
BUT REALLY ...
YOU DON'T NEED TO FUSS OVER THINGS LIKE THIS.
I DID SOME CHORES, YEAH.
I UNPACKED, AND WENT SHOPPING.
FORGET THAT CRAP I SAID.
YOU DIDN'T SPEND ALL DAY CLEANING THE HOUSE, DID YOU?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!

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OH, DON'T OVERREACT. IT'S STILL BETTER THAN YOUR ROOM.
YEAH, BUT...
JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, IT WAS EMPTY.
AND YOU GOT A LOT OF TAPES.
CAN I BORROW SOME?
SURE.
"BOY"... IT'S A LONDON BOUTIQUE, RIGHT?
I KNOW THIS BRAND.
BOY
THAT WAS A GIFT FROM A FRIEND.
WOW. THAT'S A COOL JACKET.
WOW!
WHAT, NO BATTERIES?
A DISCMAN! IT'S SO SMALL!
NO WAY!
YOU'VE GOT A CD PLAYER?!

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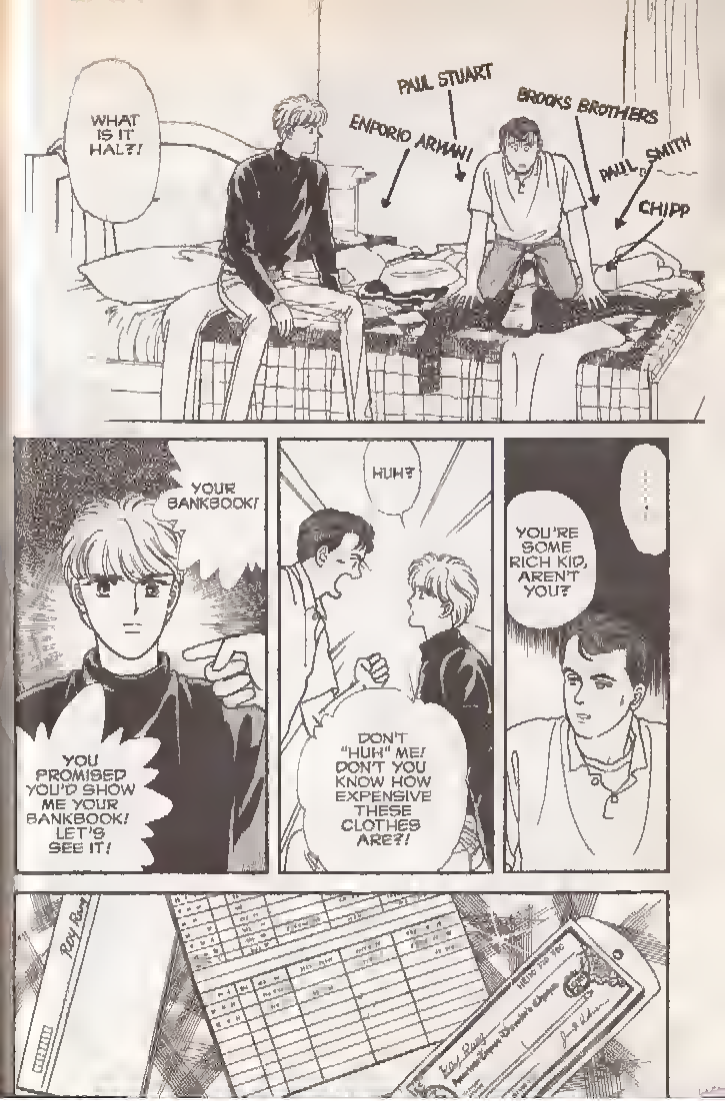

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SHUT
I DIDN'T BRING EVERYTHING I HAD.
OUR INCOME WAS STRICTLY DIVIDED.
I KNOW THERE WERE THREE OTHER ACCOUNTS NAMED "JAKE."
I THOUGHT I WAS POOR.
REALLY ?
THAT'S ENOUGH TO PAY RENT HERE FOR A LIFETIME.
.....
WELL...
I HAD A FIXED BUDGET, AND SAVED THE REST...
DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH MONEY YOU'VE GOT?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?!

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I LEFT ALL THE CONTRACTS AND HOME EXPENSES UP TO HIM.
JAKE TOOK CARE OF EVERYTHING TILL NOW.
WHY DON'T YOU MOVE TO A NICER PLACE?
NO.
I'LL STAY HERE.
HMM.
.....

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WE'LL HAVE TO EAT IT SOON.
OH, CRAP.
IT'S STARTING TO MOLD.
WHAT?
IS IT ACTUALLY A FOOD?
I THOUGHT THOSE WERE FOR NEW YEAR'S
WHY DID YOU PUT THOSE EVERY-WHERE?
UH ..

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I SEE...
HEY, GIMME A HAND WITH THIS.
WHOMp
WE PUT THEM IN PLACES THAT LOOK DANGEROUS...
IT'S A GOOD LUCK CHARM.
...OR PLACES WE'RE AFRAID MIGHT CATCH FIRE.
OKAY.
TURN OFF THE HEAT AND POUR THE HOT WATER INTO A BOWL.
SSSSH
OW...

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I JUST WANT TO HELP.
SORRY!
NO, WAIT! STOP THAT!
IT ONLY SPILLED ON MY SHOES. IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
Quick follow up
YOU'RE OVER-REACTING.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET SO EXCITED OVER THIS, FOR PETE'S SAKE!
I'M NOT GONNA DIE FROM THIS! I SAID IT'S NO BIG DEAL!
SORRY.
PLEASE DON'T DIE ON ME, HAL.

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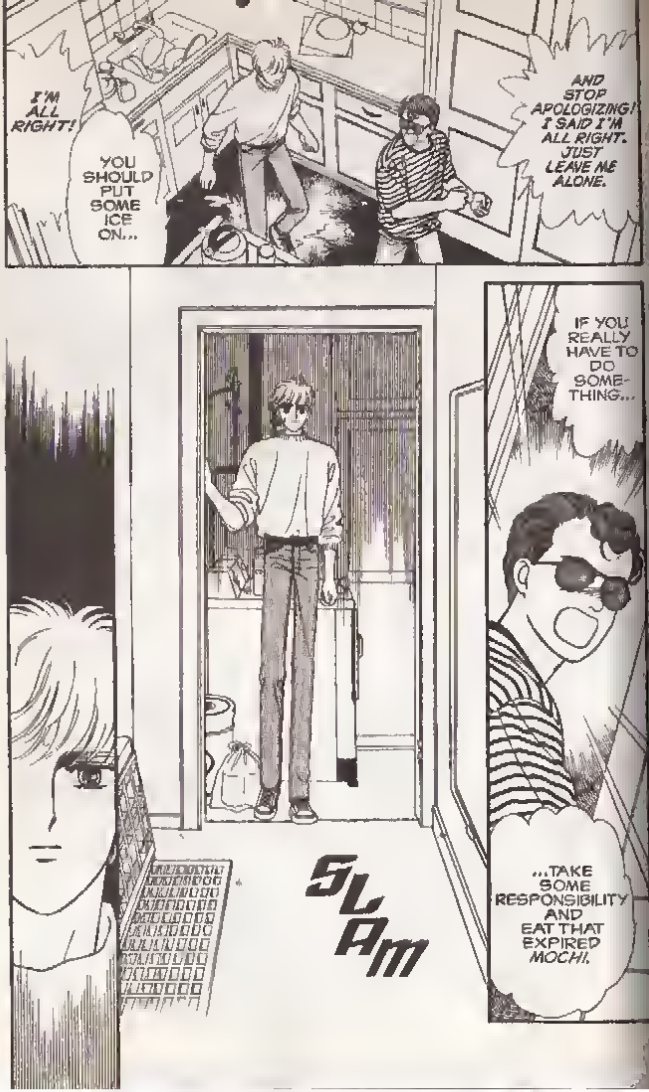
I'M ALL RIGHT!
YOU SHOULD PUT SOME ICE ON...
AND STOP APOLOGIZING! I SAID I'M ALL RIGHT. JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.
IF YOU REALLY HAVE TO DO SOME-THING...
...TAKE SOME RESPONSIBILITY AND EAT THAT EXPIRED MOCHI.
SLAM

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HE'S JUST TRYING TO BE NICE.
HE'S TOO NICE THAT'S WHAT'S KILLING ME.
IT'D BE EASIER IF HE WAS SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN.
I'M SICK OF ALL THIS POLITE-NESS.
I CAN'T EVEN MAKE A JOKE, SINCE HE TAKES IT ALL SO SERIOUSLY.
I DON'T THINK HE WANTS TO KEEP PUTTING UP WITH THIS HIMSELF.
IS THERE SOME REASON FOR IT?
IT'S KILLING ME BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I DON'T WANT TO DO!
I don't really hate him, after all.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST PUT UP WITH IT?
THE TWO WEEKS END TOMORROW, RIGHT?

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BUT IT'S LATE. IT'S ALREADY SEVEN...
RATTLE RATTLE
HE'S GONNA CALL ME TO COME PICK HIM UP WHEN HE'S DONE.
KACHAK
CREAK
NAH, HE'S GOT A JOB.
HE'S NOT THERE, IS HE?
JUST SLEEP ON IT TONIGHT.
YEAH.
SORRY. DID I STARTLE YOU?
I DECIDED TO TAKE THE BUS HOME.
WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME?!
WH-WHAT??
I'M HOME.
SLAM
I DIDN'T WANT TO BOTHER YOU.
I THOUGHT, WITH YOUR BAD FOOT AND ALL...
GACHAK

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GOOD AFTERNOON
FINALLY, CIPHER VOLUME SIX IT TURNS OUT THIS SERIES HAS DEFINITELY LASTED LONGER THAN ALIEN ROAD * SINCE THE TWINS ARE SEPARATED IN NEW YORK AND L.A., I GUESS I WON'T HAVE TO DRAW THEM TOGETHER FOR A WHILE
JUST LIKE HAL HAS APPEARED AS A NEW CHARACTER WITH CIPHER IN L.A., A NEW CHARACTER HAS ALSO APPEARED IN NEW YORK. DRAWING THESE NEW CHARACTERS IS GIVING ME A FRESH ATTITUDE!
EVERYBODY IS SAYING THAT THE NEW CHARACTER ALEXANDRA LEVINE LOOKS LIKE TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY BUT IS HE REALLY THAT SIMILAR?
*CMX EDITOR'S NOTE: MINARO NARITA IS REFERRING TO THE ORIGINAL JAPANESE VOLUMES OF CIPHER. THE CMX VOLUMES ARE NUMBERED DIFFERENTLY.
WHAT?
YOU CRAZY...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! MY FOOT IS FINE!
I WANTED TO COME PICK YOU UP!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO CALL ME! NOT GET ALL FREAKY!
DON'T APOLOGIZE!
OH...
I'M... SORRY.
UH..
THANK YOU.

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HE'S PRETTY INNOCENT, REALLY
PAT
WHEN YOU THANK HIM TO HIS FACE OR WORRY ABOUT HIM...
Just felt like it.
WHAT WAS THAT?
YOU'RE SO CUTE!
...HE GETS ALL FLUSTERED AND DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
Hiding his eyes
NO, NOT AT ALL...
ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE FUN OF ME?!
CUTE?!

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I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THIS FROM SOME SPOILED EAST COAST BRAT!
YOU'RE SERIOUS, POLITE... AGH! NO, NO!
YOU TAKE EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY!
THAT'S WHAT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY, I TELL YA!
IF I TOLD YOU THE TRUTH...
...YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S "CUTE!"
UGH!
I'LL BET YOU'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN IN A FIGHT.
YOU'VE GOT SKIN AS PRETTY AS A GIRL'S.
PAT PAT
OH YES I HAVE!

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GRRR
WHAT?
I DON'T SEE ANY-THING.
HERE'S THE PROOF!
HA! I DON'T BELIEVE THAT!
POIK!
IF YOU THINK I'M LYING, TRY SAYING IT AGAIN!
AND DON'T CALL ME A SPOILED BRAT!
WHEN I GOT IN A FIGHT, I DIDN'T JUST HIDE BEHIND MOM'S APRON!

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WHEN A RIVAL TALKED TRASH TO ME AT AN AUDITION, I FILLED HIS SHOES WITH DOG CRAP!
I SOLD FLOUR AS COCAINE. WHEN I GOT CAUGHT, I GOT THE CRAP KICKED OUT OF ME.
IN THE NEW YORK GHETTOS, I'M A FULL-FLEDGED STEEL REINFORCED BRAT!
AGH!
THAT'S RIGHT! I AM A BRAT!
HUH?!
ACTU-ALLY, I...
AND THERE'S MORE...
AT AN AUDITION WHEN I WAS TEN...

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YEAH, WELL... THINGS CHANGE.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE IT.
HEY, HAL!
THIS IS SARAH COLEMAN. SHE GOES TO COLLEGE WITH ME.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
Infamous?
THIS IS THE INFAMOUS ROOM-MATE-- ROY RANG.
SORRY I HUNG UP ON YOU LIKE THAT.
OH..

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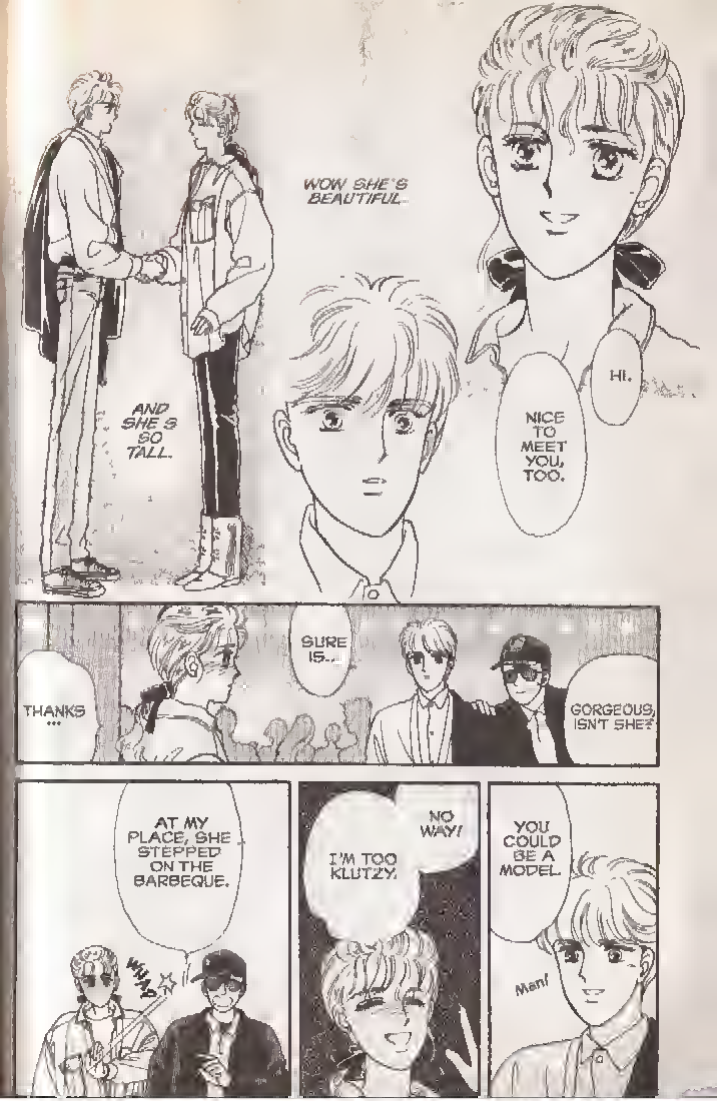

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WHAT DID HE MEAN BY "THINGS CHANGE?"
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN BEFORE YOU CAME HERE?
HI
IS THIS HAL'S HANG-OUT?
YES.
HIS FRIENDS ALL COME HERE.
OW!
ARE FRANCES AND MARK HERE?
THEY'RE OUT ON THE FLOOR.
THAT'S HAL.
HE TRIES TO ACT TOUGH, BUT HE REALLY CARES ABOUT PEOPLE.
I SEE.
WHETHER HE LIKES OR IS SICK OF ME...
I CAN'T TELL.
HE LAUGHED AT ME!
?

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I'M GLAD HE FINALLY FOUND A ROOM-MATE.
I HOPE YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM.
HE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY LONELY.
HE SAID RECENTLY, HE WAS THINKING ABOUT GETTING A DOG
OH, I GUESS YOU'VE ALREADY FIGURED THAT OUT.
I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU ANY-THING.
WHAT, ME?!
I DON'T DISLIKE HAL.
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW HE FEELS.
WHAT, YOU DON'T WANT TO LIVE WITH HAL?
I HAVEN'T DECIDED WHETHER TO MOVE IN YET!
WAIT A MINUTE!

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AAAGH!
.....
IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, DO IT YOURSELF!
WHAT'S WITH THE ATTITUDE?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WAS LOOKING FOR A PLACE.
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
PAT
OKAY, OKAY! I GET IT!
I'LL CLEAN UP, OKAY?

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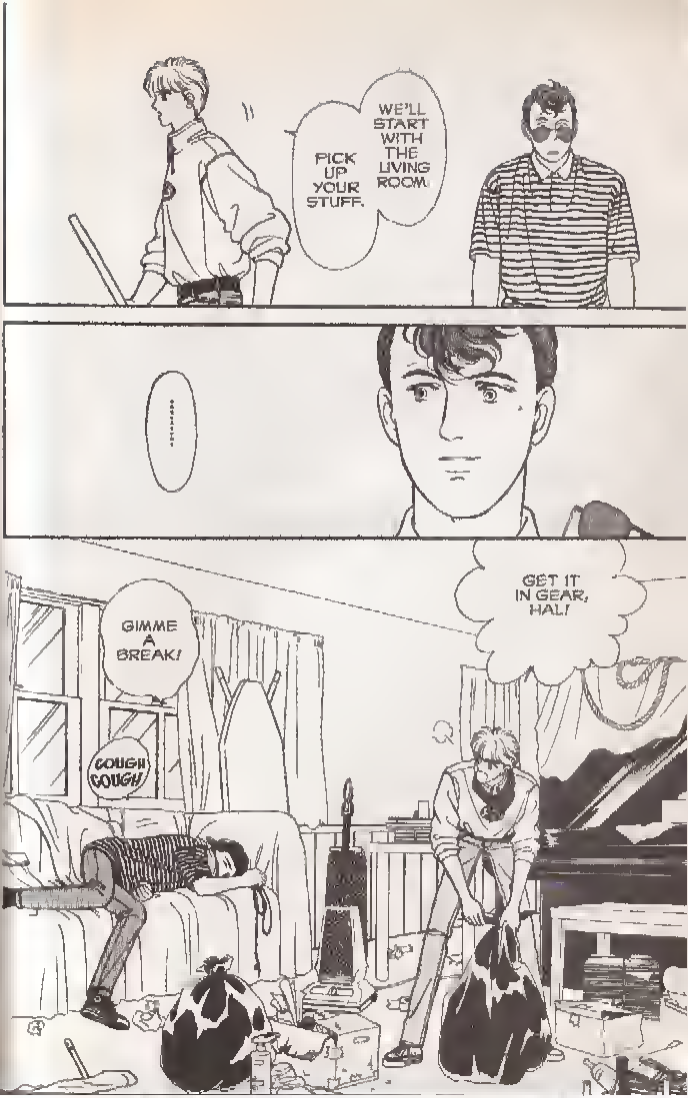

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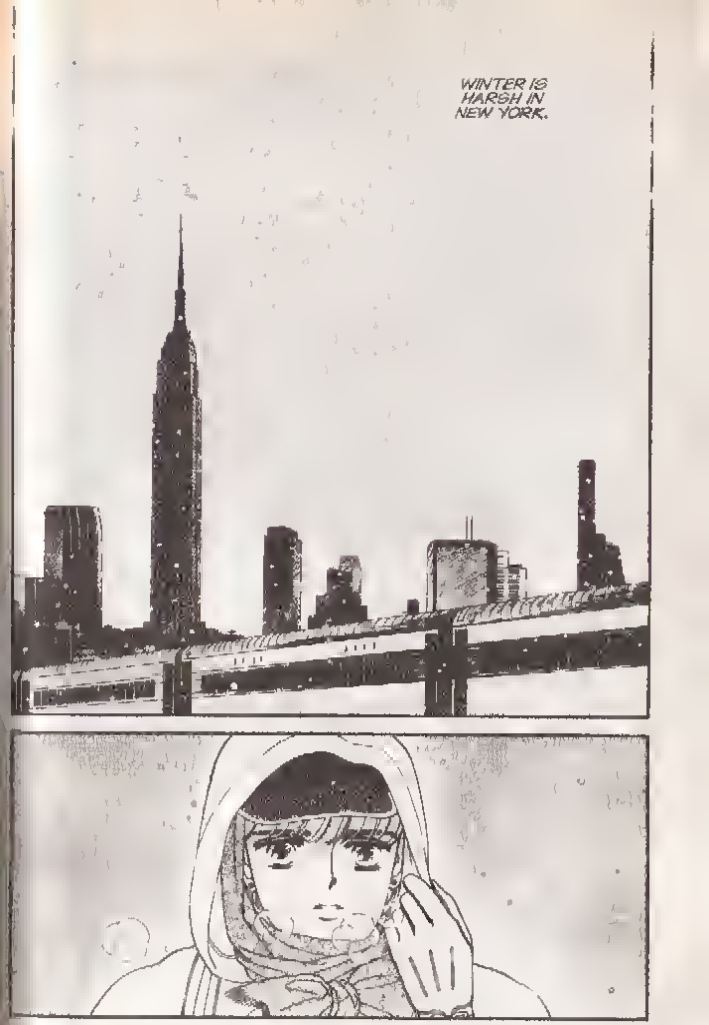

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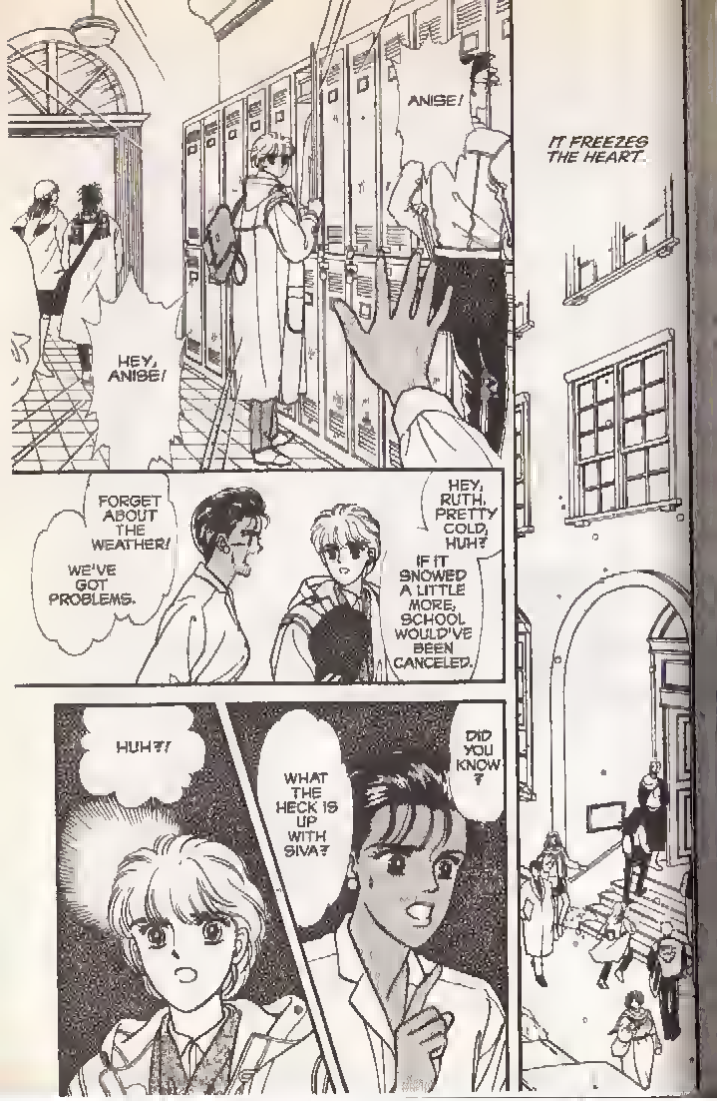
ANISE!
IT FREEZES THE HEART.
HEY, ANISE!
FORGET ABOUT THE WEATHER!
WE'VE GOT PROBLEMS.
HEY, RUTH. PRETTY COLD, HUH?
IF IT SNOWED A LITTLE MORE, SCHOOL WOULD'VE BEEN CANCELED.
HUH?!
WHAT THE HECK IS UP WITH SIVA?
DID YOU KNOW?

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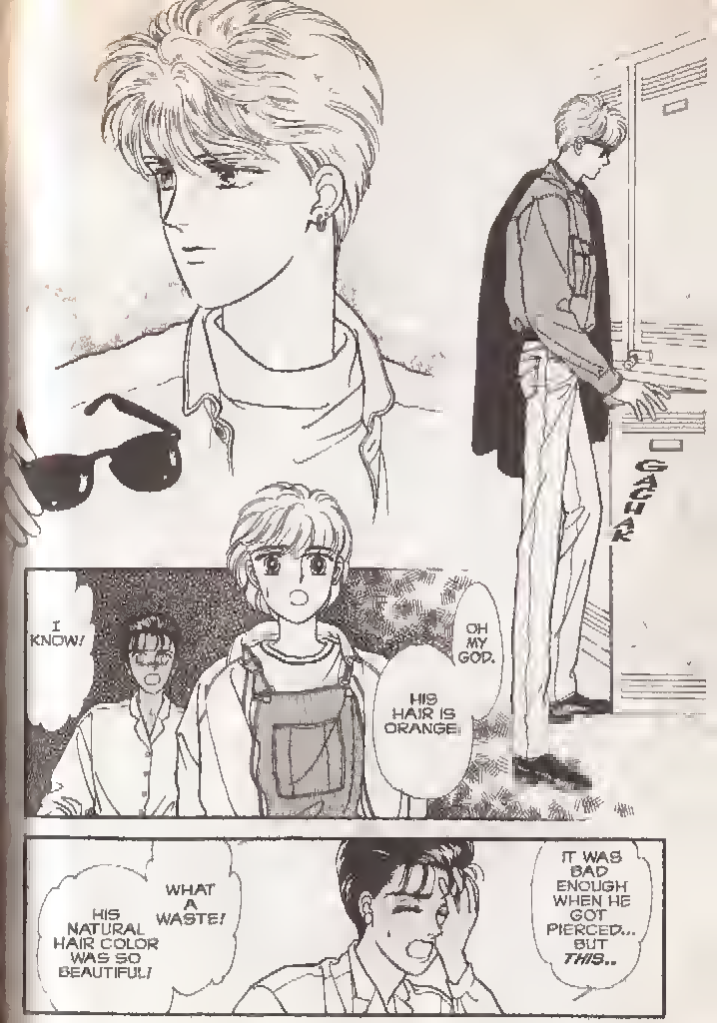
GACHA
I KNOW!
OH MY GOD.
HIS HAIR IS ORANGE!
HIS NATURAL HAIR COLOR WAS SO BEAUTIFUL!
WHAT A WASTE!
IT WAS BAD ENOUGH WHEN HE GOT PIERCED... BUT THIS..

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I JUST LOVE IT!
THE HAIR COLOR, THE EARRING... HE'S ALWAYS SO FASHIONABLE!
Where's she cross from?
MO... MOLLY...
YOU THINK SO?
I THINK IT'S GREAT LIKE THIS!
HE'D EVEN LOOK GOOD IN A DRESS!
I SAW HIM LIKE THAT ONCE.
HE DID SOMETHING LIKE THIS LAST SUMMER
UH.. NO..
YOU HAVEN'T SAID A WORD. DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, ANISE?
I love it.
OH...
GAH!
NO, HE WOULDN'T! HE'D LOOK AWFUL!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, YOU IDIOT!

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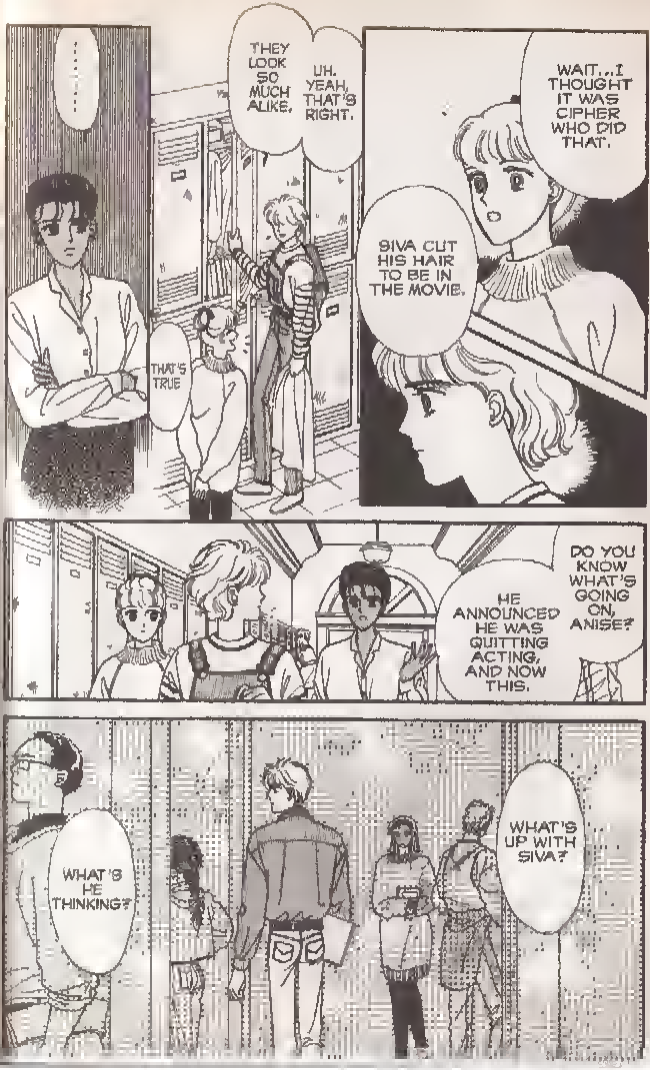
.....
THEY LOOK SO MUCH ALIKE.
UH. YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT'S TRUE
WAIT...I THOUGHT IT WAS CIPHER WHO DID THAT.
SIVA CUT HIS HAIR TO BE IN THE MOVIE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, ANISE?
HE ANNOUNCED HE WAS QUITTING ACTING, AND NOW THIS.
WHAT'S HE THINKING?
WHAT'S UP WITH SIVA?

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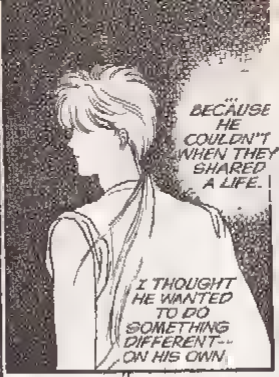
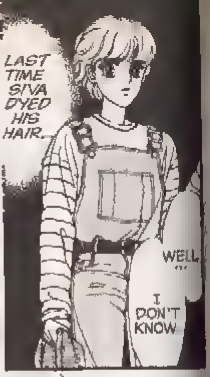
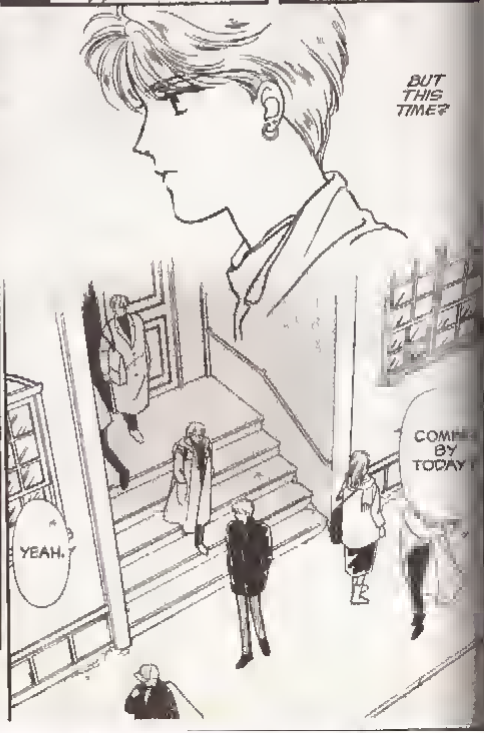
I ONLY TRIED TO ADD SOME CHARACTER AROUND THE EYES IT REALLY LIKE TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY NOW, TOO! BUT THE PERSONALITY IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT AND TERENCE'S HAIR IS BRAIDED WHILE ALEX'S IS IN DREADLOCKS. BLACK PEOPLE'S HAIR GETS LIKE THIS NATURALLY IF THEY KEEP GROWING IT OUT, BUT OTHER PEOPLE WITH STRONG KINKS IN THEIR HAIR GET LIKE THIS, TOO, EVENTUALLY. AND HE WASHES HIS HAIR EVERYDAY! EVER SINCE THEY GOT TOGETHER, PEOPLE SAY THEY LOOK "DANGEROUS."







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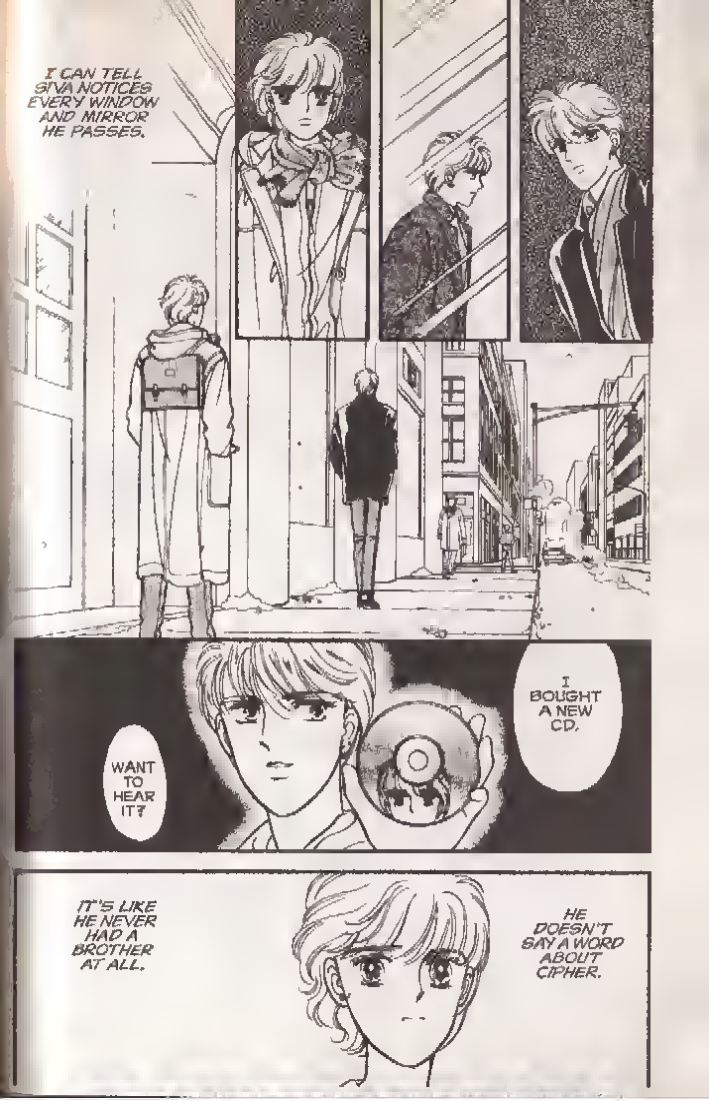
I CAN TELL SIVA NOTICES EVERY WINDOW AND MIRROR HE PASSES.
I BOUGHT A NEW CD.
WANT TO HEAR IT?
IT'S LIKE HE NEVER HAD A BROTHER AT ALL.
HE DOESN'T SAY A WORD ABOUT CIPHER.

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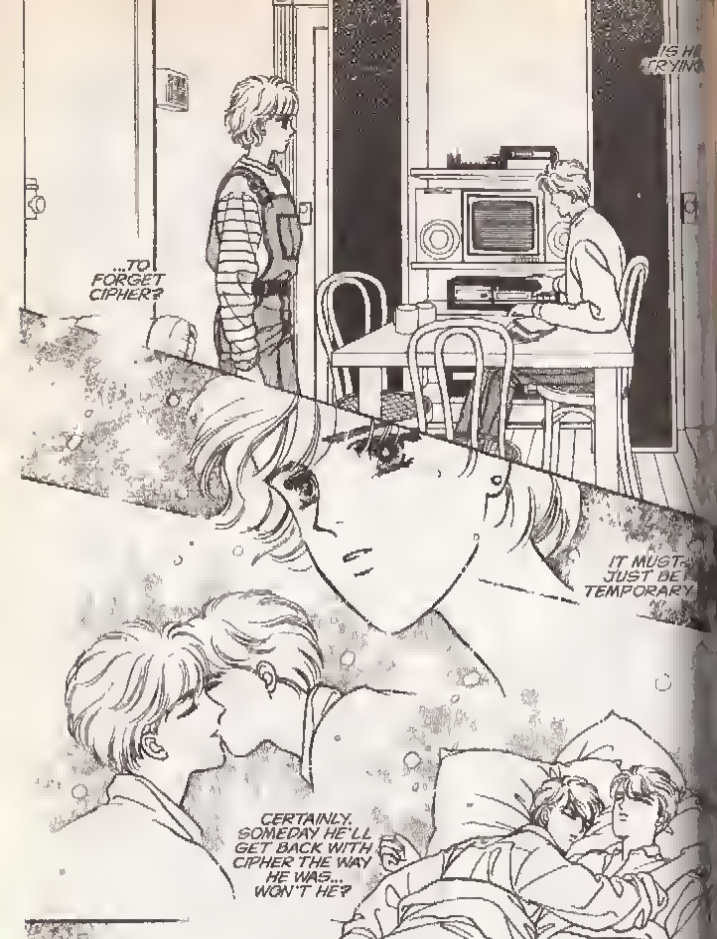
IS HE TRYING
...TO FORGET CIPHER?
IT MUST JUST BE TEMPORARY
CERTAINLY. SOMEDAY HE'LL GET BACK WITH CIPHER THE WAY HE WAS... WON'T HE?
CIPHER...

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ABOUT SIVA AGAIN...
HEY, ANISE!
IT'S NOT HIS APPEAR-ANCE THIS TIME.
WH-WHAT?
NOTHING ABOUT HIM LOOKED DIFFERENT TODAY.
NO, NOT THAT!
I'M TALKING ABOUT *MUSIC* CLUBS, *DANCE* CLUBS... STUFF LIKE THAT!
"OH?
WHICH SCHOOL CLUBS, DID HE...?
RECENTLY...
IT APPEARS THAT HE'S BEEN GOING TO CLUBS ALL OVER.

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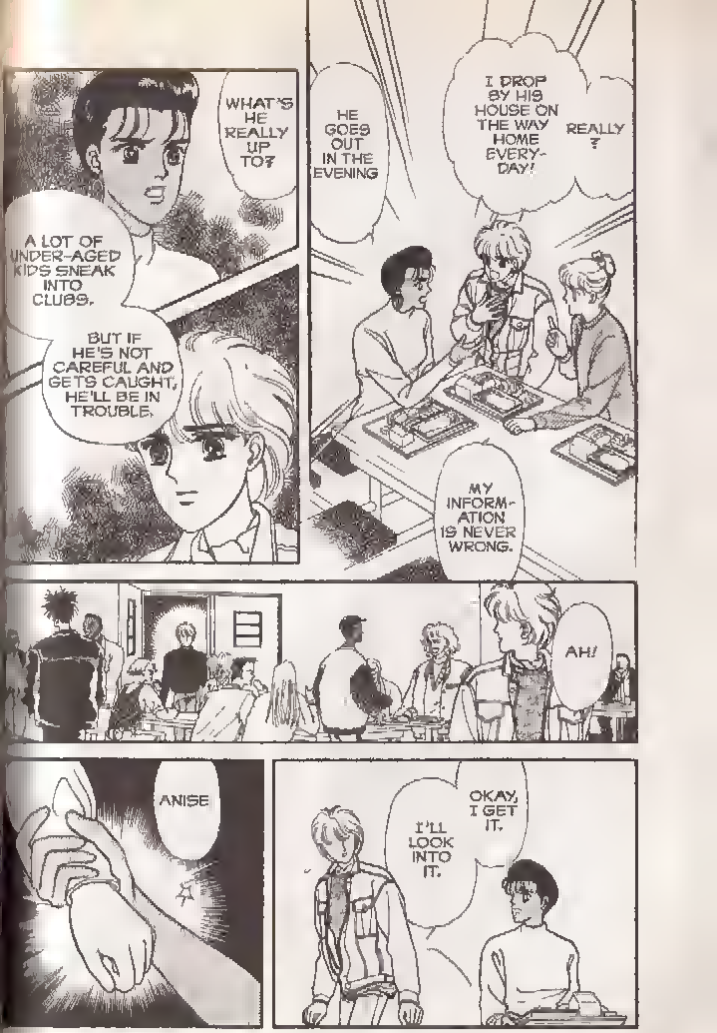
WHAT'S HE REALLY UP TO?
A LOT OF UNDER-AGED KIDS SNEAK INTO CLUBS.
BUT IF HE'S NOT CAREFUL AND GETS CAUGHT, HE'LL BE IN TROUBLE.
HE GOES OUT IN THE EVENING
I DROP BY HIS HOUSE ON THE WAY HOME EVERY-DAY!
REALLY ?
MY INFORM-ATION IS NEVER WRONG.
AH!
ANISE
OKAY, I GET IT.
I'LL LOOK INTO IT.

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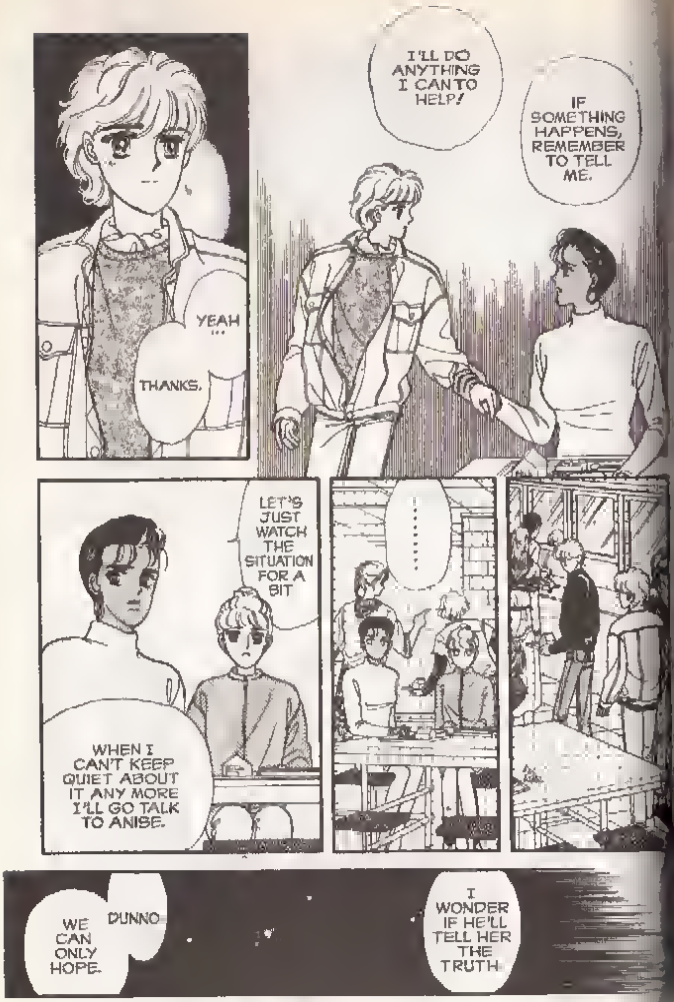
I'LL DO ANYTHING I CAN TO HELP!
IF SOMETHING HAPPENS, REMEMBER TO TELL ME.
YEAH ...
THANKS.
LET'S JUST WATCH THE SITUATION FOR A BIT
WHEN I CAN'T KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT ANY MORE I'LL GO TALK TO ANISE.
.....
DUNNO.
WE CAN ONLY HOPE.
I WONDER IF HE'LL TELL HER THE TRUTH.

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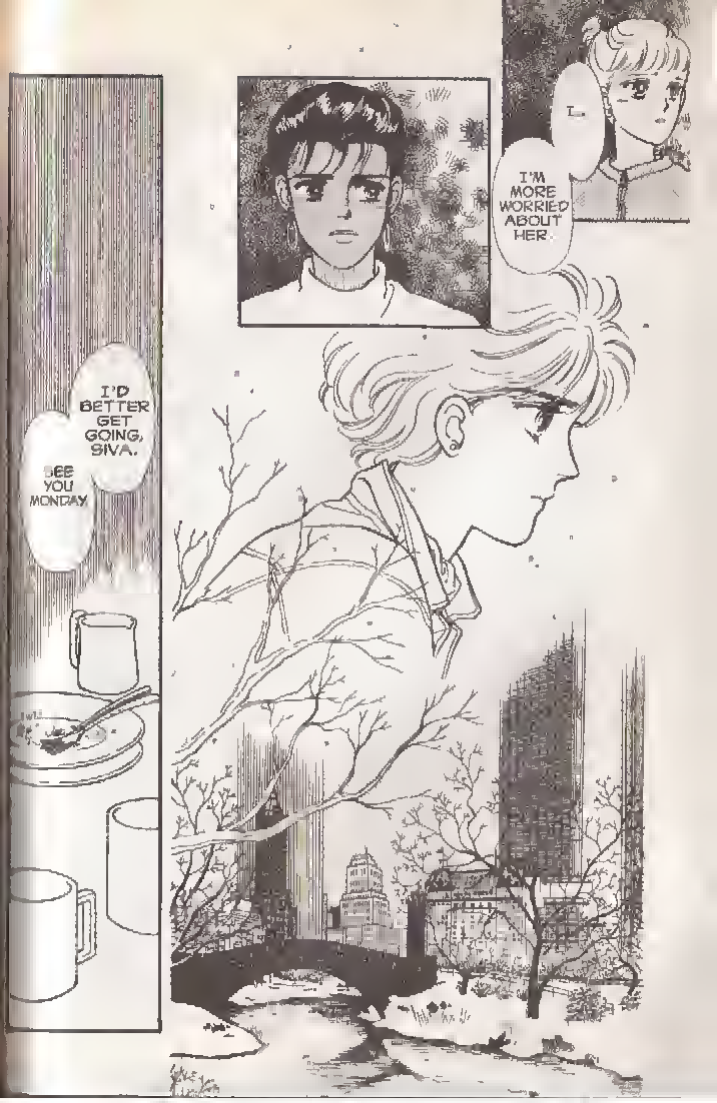

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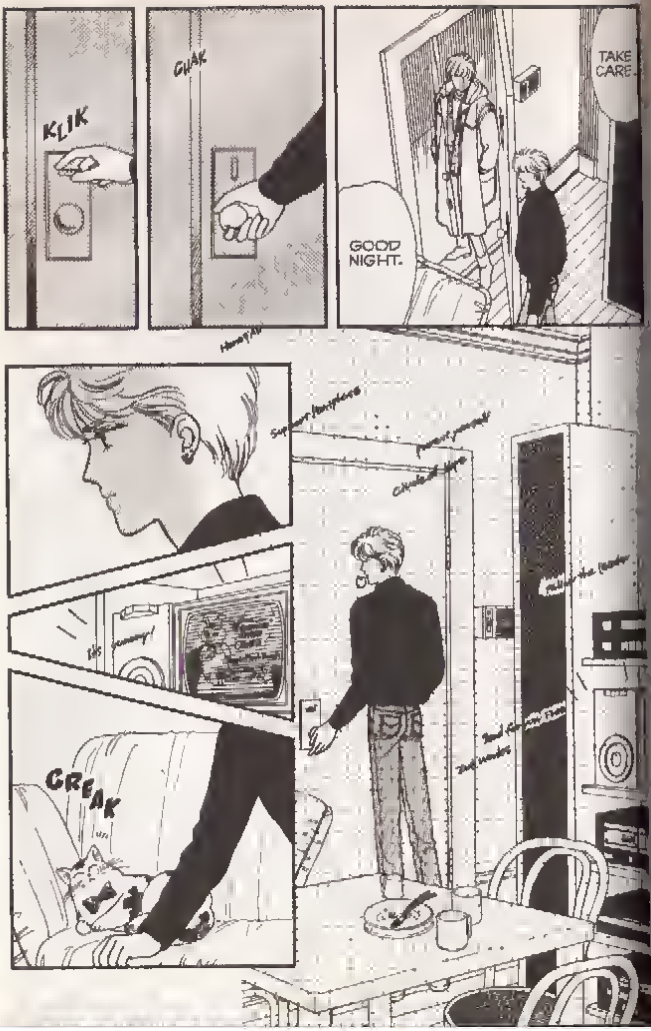

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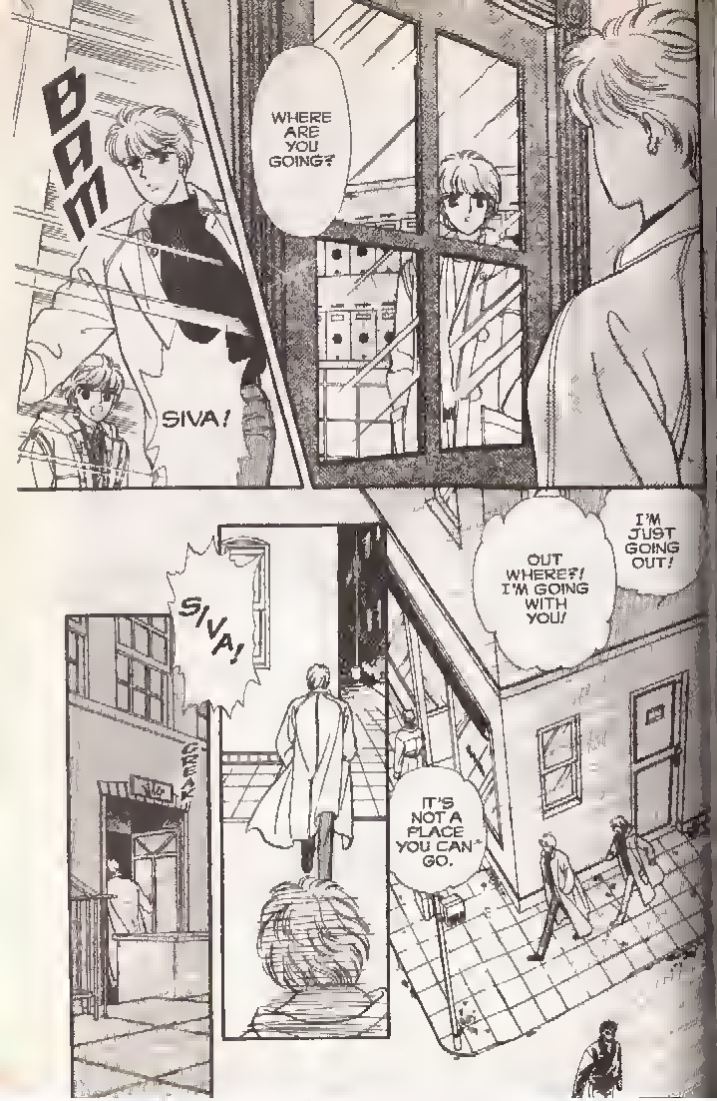

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I'M SORRY, BUT KIDS AREN'T ALLOWED IN HERE.
HUH?
DASH
I'M... I'M NOT A KID!
I'M...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? GO ON HOME!
BUT YOU'RE UNDER-AGED TOO, YOU KNOW!
CLOMP
I'M THE SAME AGE AS THIS GUY!

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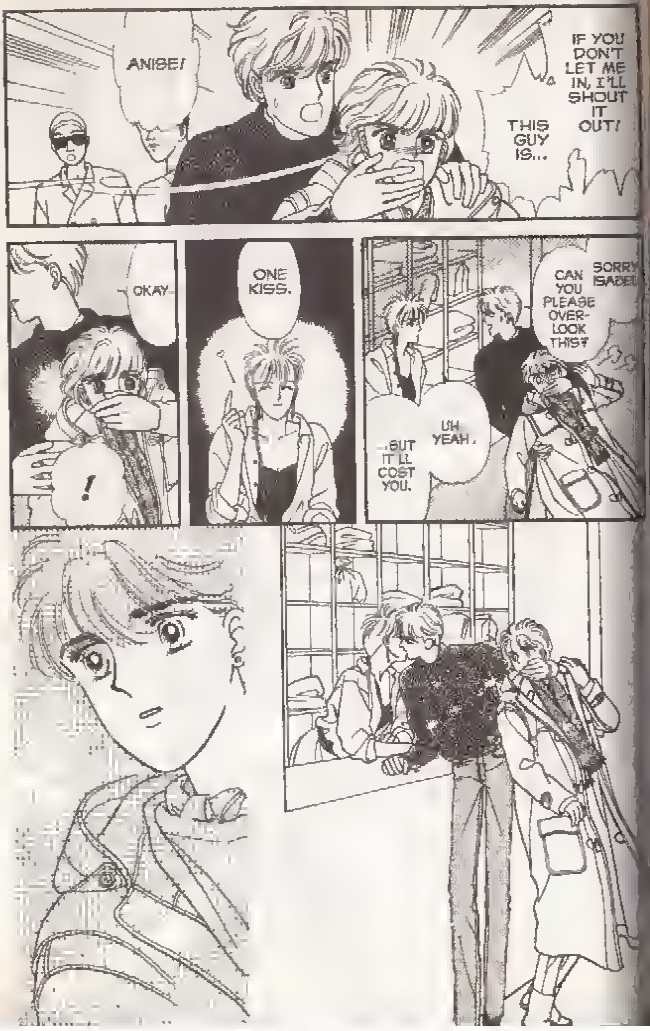

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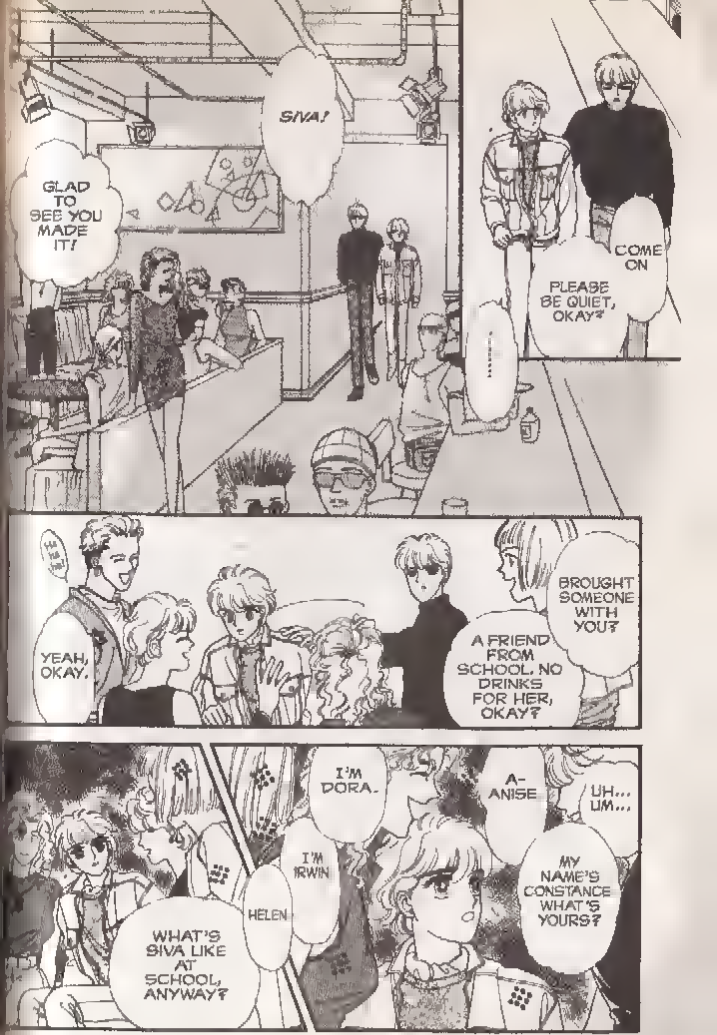

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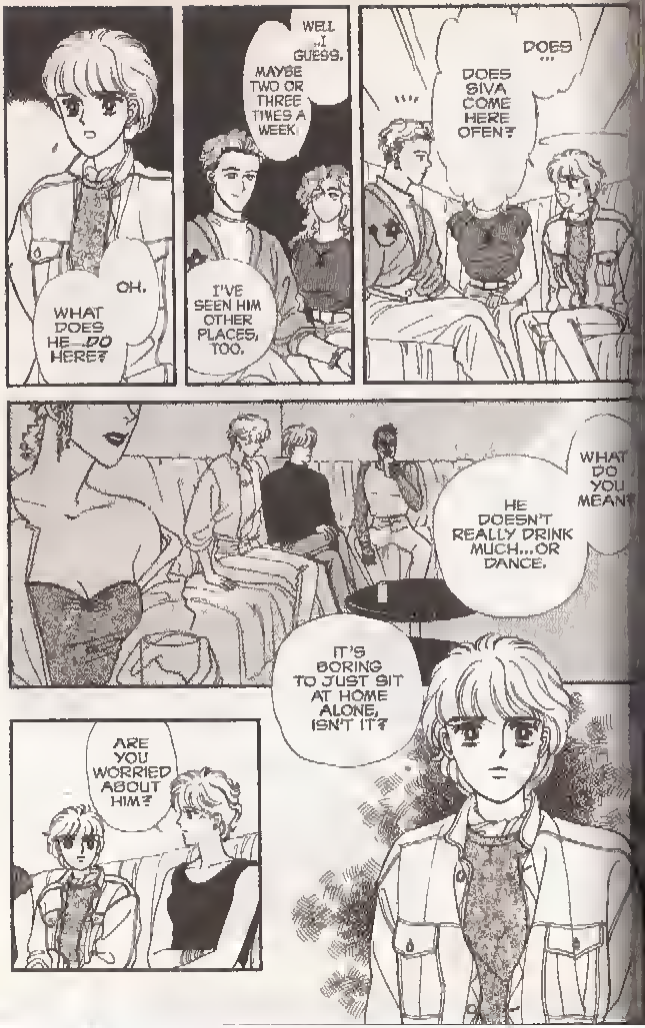
OH.
WHAT DOES HE—DO HERE?
WELL ...I GUESS, MAYBE TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK.
I'VE SEEN HIM OTHER PLACES, TOO.
DOES ...
DOES SIVA COME HERE OFEN?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HE DOESN'T REALLY DRINK MUCH...OR DANCE.
IT'S BORING TO JUST SIT AT HOME ALONE, ISN'T IT?
ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT HIM?

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DON'T WORRY. HE'S PRETTY GUARDED
HE WANTS TO BE LOVED. BUT IF SOMEBODY TRIES TO REACH OUT TO HIM...
HE INSTANTLY TIGHTENS UP AND RUNS OFF.
NOBODY CAN TOUCH HIM.
HE'S LIKE A CAT.

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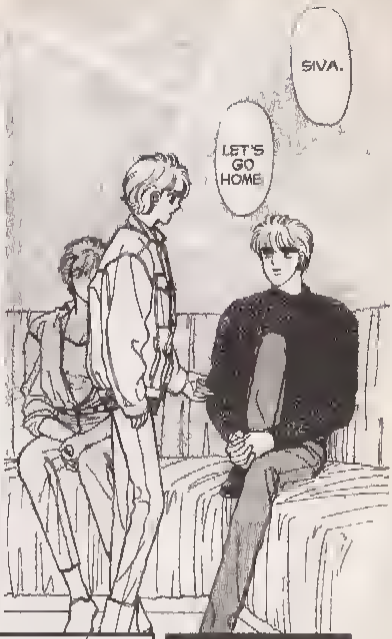

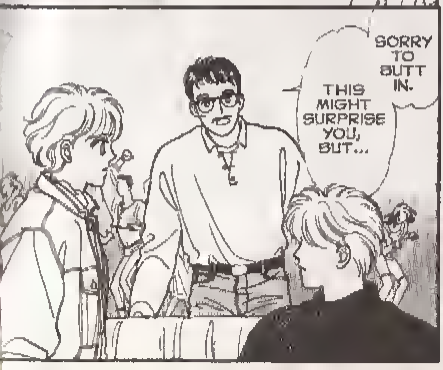

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LISTEN.
HAVE YOU EVEN THOUGHT OF BECOMING A MODEL?
CAFE
I'M A WRITER AND EDITOR FOR THIS JAPANESE FASHION MAGAZINE.
LET ME EXPLAIN IT FROM THE START.
12

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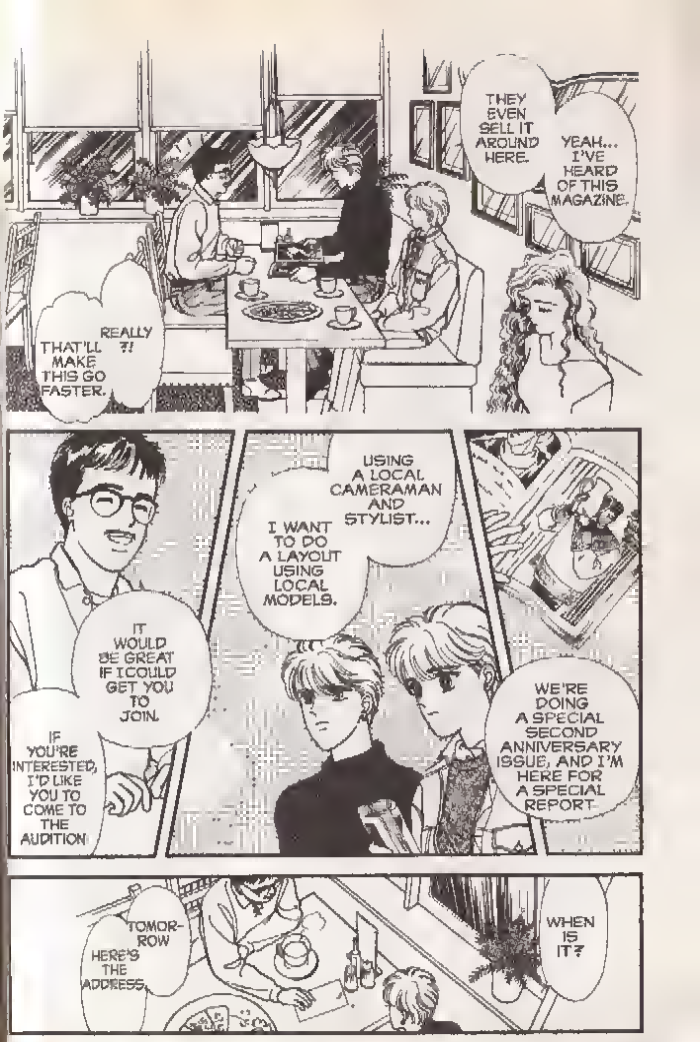
THEY EVEN SELL IT AROUND HERE.
YEAH... I'VE HEARD OF THIS MAGAZINE.
REALLY ?!
THAT'LL MAKE THIS GO FASTER.
USING A LOCAL CAMERAMAN AND STYLIST...
I WANT TO DO A LAYOUT USING LOCAL MODELS.
IT WOULD BE GREAT IF I COULD GET YOU TO JOIN.
IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, I'D LIKE YOU TO COME TO THE AUDITION
WE'RE DOING A SPECIAL SECOND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE, AND I'M HERE FOR A SPECIAL REPORT.
TOMOR-ROW
HERE'S THE ADDRESS.
WHEN IS IT?

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FRIENDS.
.....
BRING AS MANY FRIENDS AS YOU WANT
IF YOU HAVE ANY THAT ARE INTERESTED.
I DON'T HAVE ANY.
BUT... BUT YOU MUST HAVE SOME ...
INVITE THEM.
IF YOU ASK THEM OVER THERE, YOU CAN GET AS MANY AS YOU WANT.
IT'S THE WEEKEND, SO THE PLACE IS PACKED.
THERE'RE ALL KINDS OF INTERESTING KIDS.
FOR EXAMPLE
HOW'S THAT ONE?

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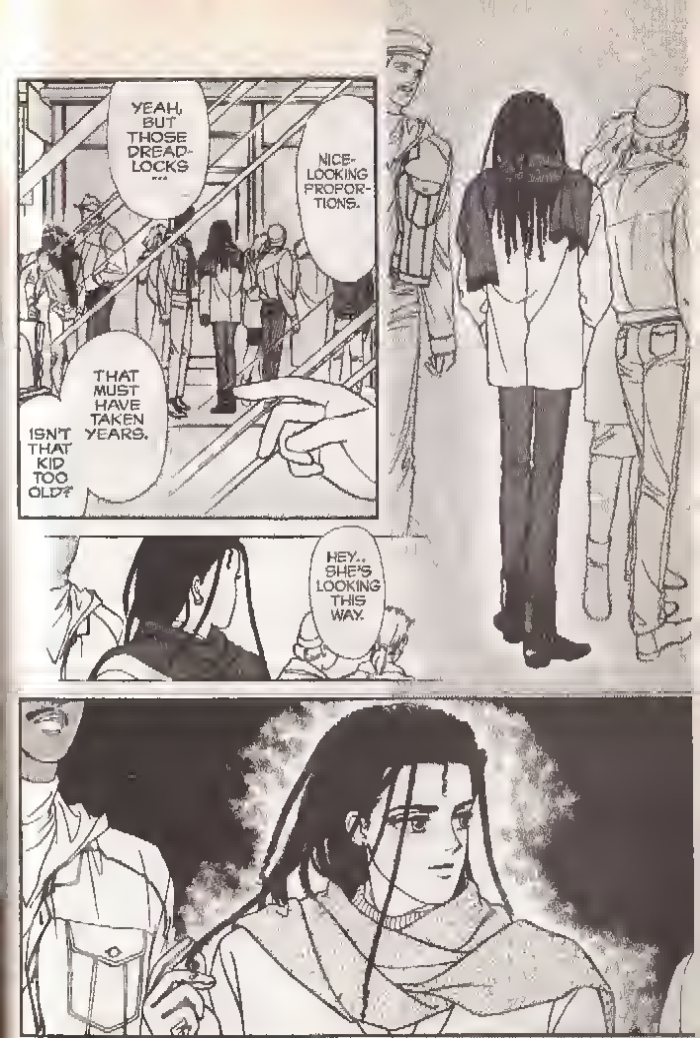
YEAH, BUT THOSE DREAD-LOCKS ...
NICE-LOOKING PROPOR-TIONS.
THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN YEARS.
ISN'T THAT KID TOO OLD?
HEY.. SHE'S LOOKING THIS WAY.

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WHACK
TEN BUCKS IT'S A GIRL.
HEY, BABY!
.....
AND I'LL FIX IT SO YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO @#%& AGAIN.
Censored due to foul language.
AH...
YOU TRY THAT ONE MORE TIME, SUCKER!

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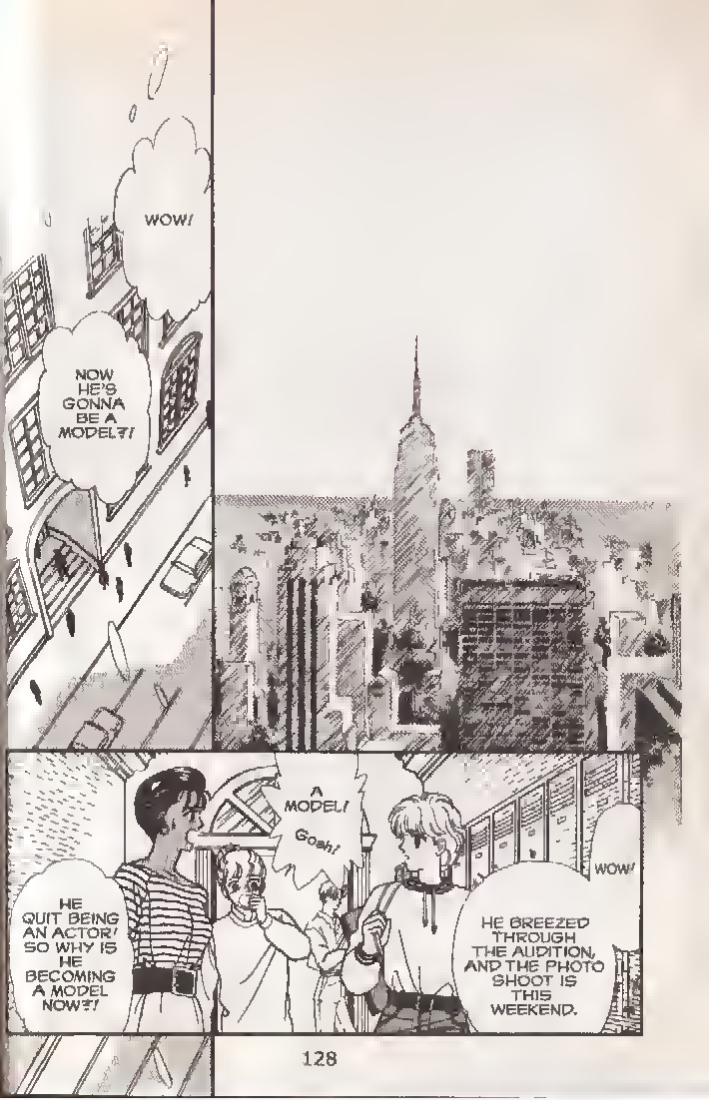
WOW!
NOW HE'S GONNA BE A MODEL?!
A MODEL!
Gosh!
WOW!
HE QUIT BEING AN ACTOR! SO WHY IS HE BECOMING A MODEL NOW?!
HE BREEZED THROUGH THE AUDITION, AND THE PHOTO SHOOT IS THIS WEEKEND.

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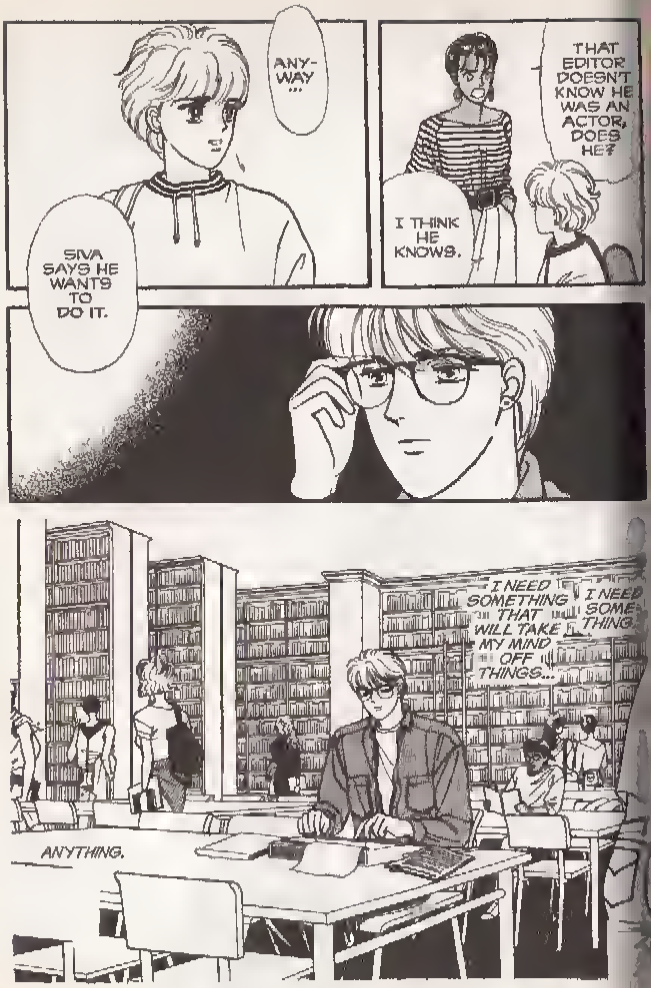
ANY-WAY...
SIVA SAYS HE WANTS TO DO IT.
THAT EDITOR DOESN'T KNOW HE WAS AN ACTOR, DOES HE?
I THINK HE KNOWS.
I NEED SOMETHING THAT WILL TAKE MY MIND OFF THINGS...
I NEED SOME-THING.
ANYTHING.

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ALEXANDRA LEVINE

PERSONAL:

Born:March 15,1968

New York City

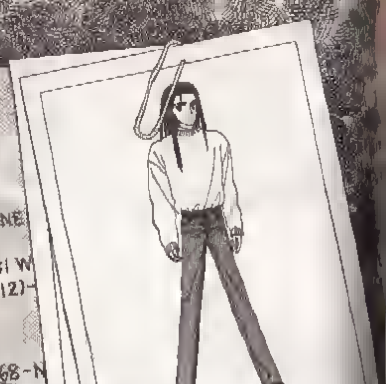
Height:5'10½"

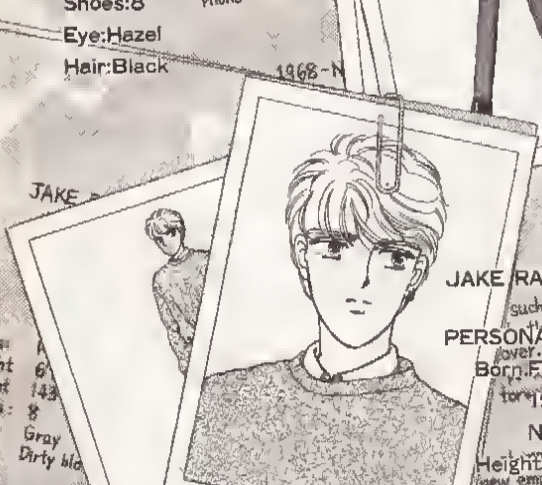
Weight:138lbs

Shoes:8

Eye:Hazel

Hair:Black





JAKE RANG

such as

PERSONAL

Born:February 4

1968

New York City

Height:6'1"

Weight:145lbs

Shoes:8

Eye:Gray

Hair:Blond

client and media

personnel

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DAMN! ARE WE GOING TO BE ABLE TO GATHER ENOUGH IN TIME?!
SEVEN
HOW MANY WERE SUPPOSED TO COME?!
ONLY TWO MODELS HAVE SHOWED UP SO FAR!
GOOD MORNING.
THAT GUY FROM BEFORE ...
I DIDN'T SEE HIM AT THE AUDITION. SO YOU DECIDED TO GO WITH HIM?
YEAH
OH! GOOD MORNING.
THE THIRD ONE'S THERE.

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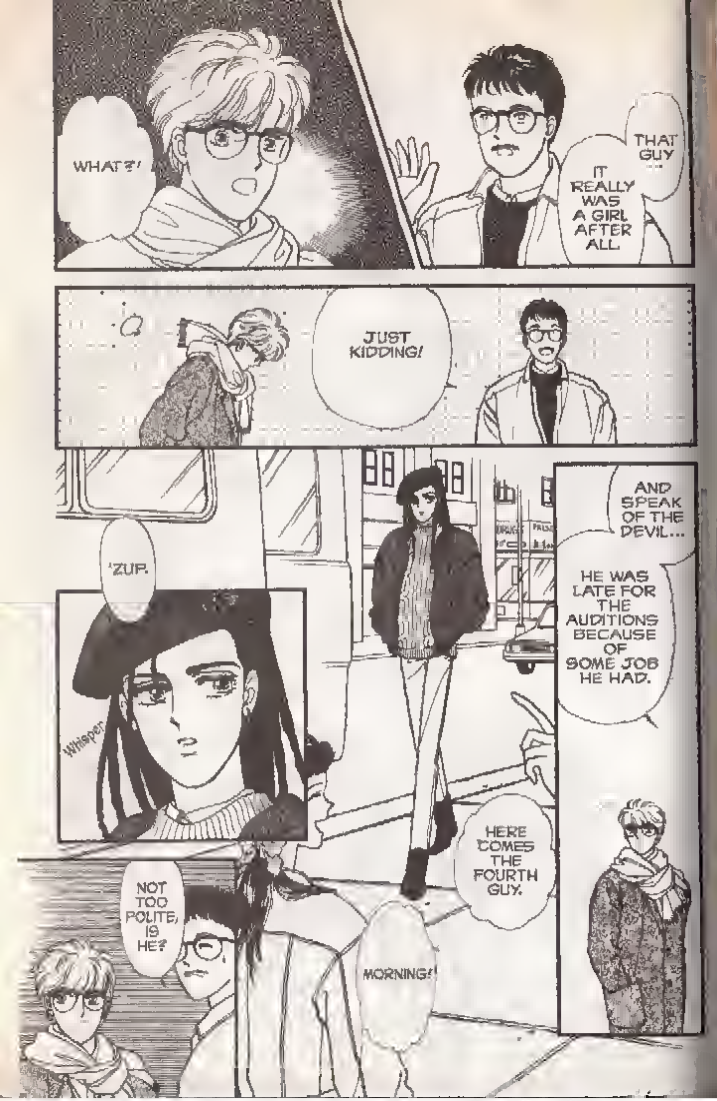
WHAT?!
THAT GUY ... IT REALLY WAS A GIRL AFTER ALL.
JUST KIDDING!
AND SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...
HE WAS LATE FOR THE AUDITIONS BECAUSE OF SOME JOB HE HAD.
'ZUP.
Whisper
HERE COMES THE FOURTH GUY.
NOT TOO POLITE, IS HE?
MORNING!

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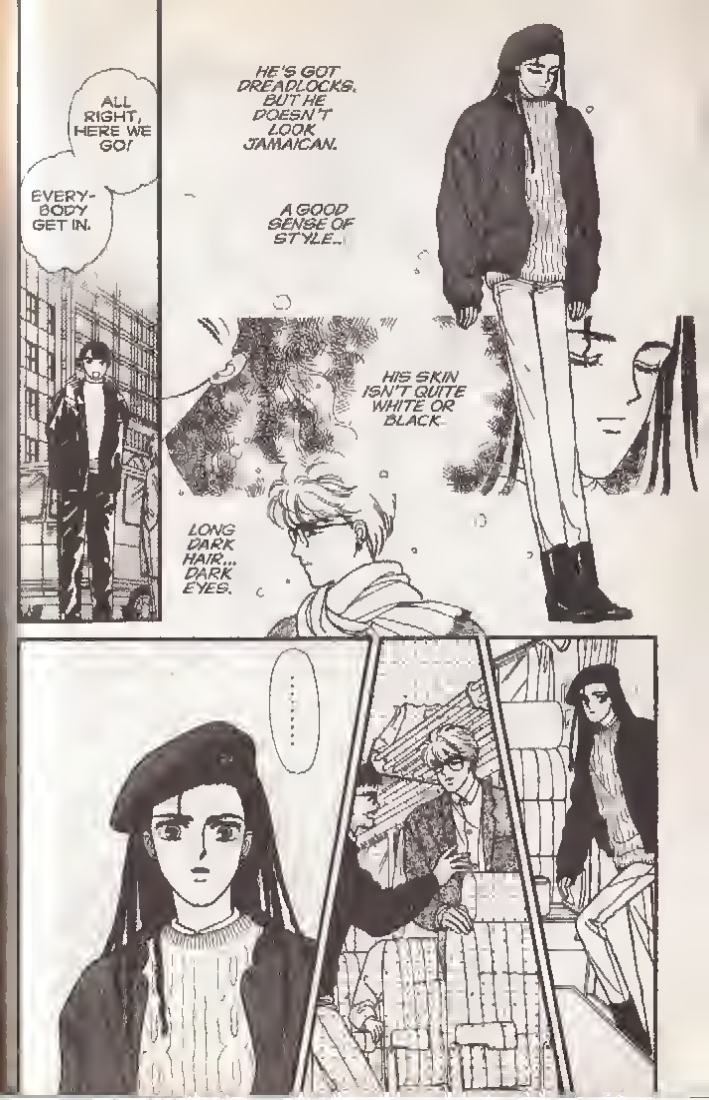
ALL RIGHT, HERE WE GO!
EVERY-BODY GET IN.
HE'S GOT DREADLOCKS. BUT HE DOESN'T LOOK JAMAICAN.
A GOOD SENSE OF STYLE...
HIS SKIN ISN'T QUITE WHITE OR BLACK.
LONG DARK HAIR... DARK EYES.
.....

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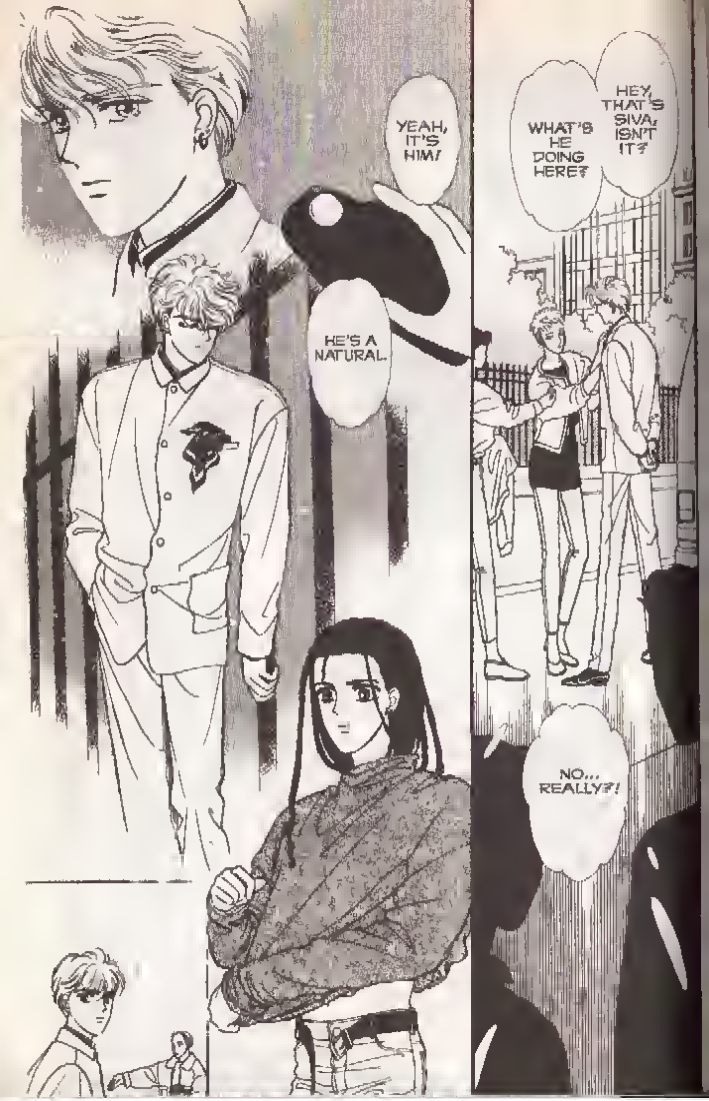

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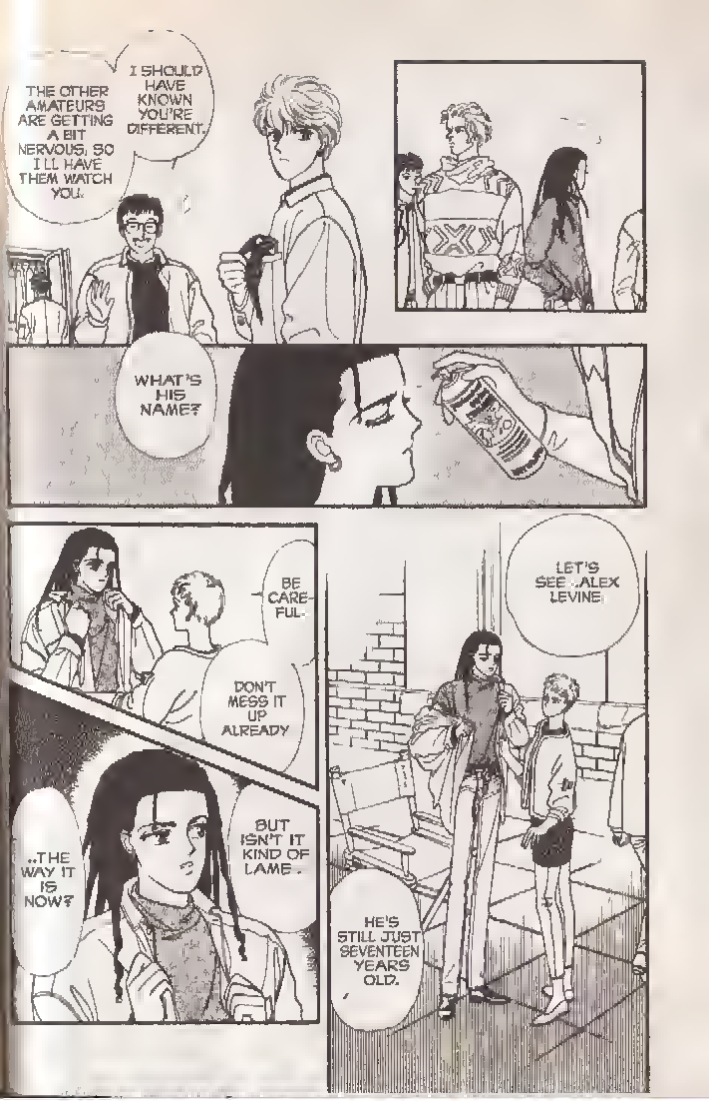
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'RE DIFFERENT.
THE OTHER AMATEURS ARE GETTING A BIT NERVOUS, SO I'LL HAVE THEM WATCH YOU.
WHAT'S HIS NAME?
BE CARE-FUL.
DON'T MESS IT UP ALREADY
..THE WAY IT IS NOW?
BUT ISN'T IT KIND OF LAME.
LET'S SEE ..ALEX LEVINE
HE'S STILL JUST SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD.

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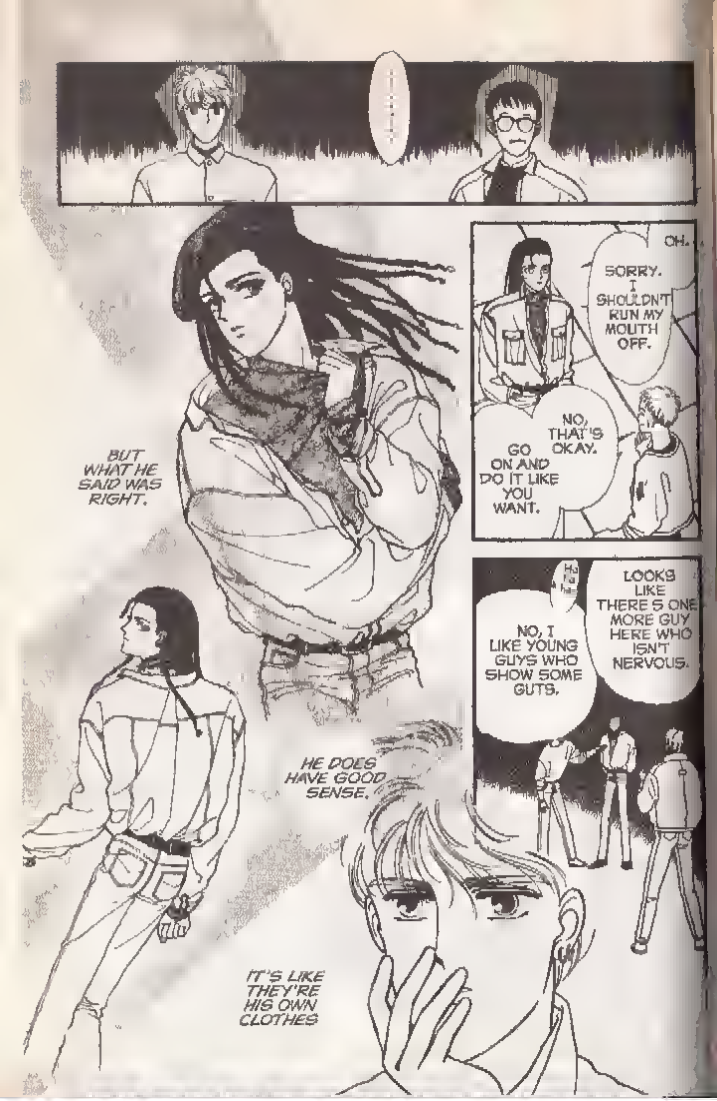
.....
OH.
SORRY. I SHOULDN'T RUN MY MOUTH OFF.
NO, THAT'S OKAY. GO ON AND DO IT LIKE YOU WANT.
BUT WHAT HE SAID WAS RIGHT.
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S ONE MORE GUY HERE WHO ISN'T NERVOUS.
HO HO
NO, I LIKE YOUNG GUYS WHO SHOW SOME GUTS.
HE DOES HAVE GOOD SENSE.
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE HIS OWN CLOTHES

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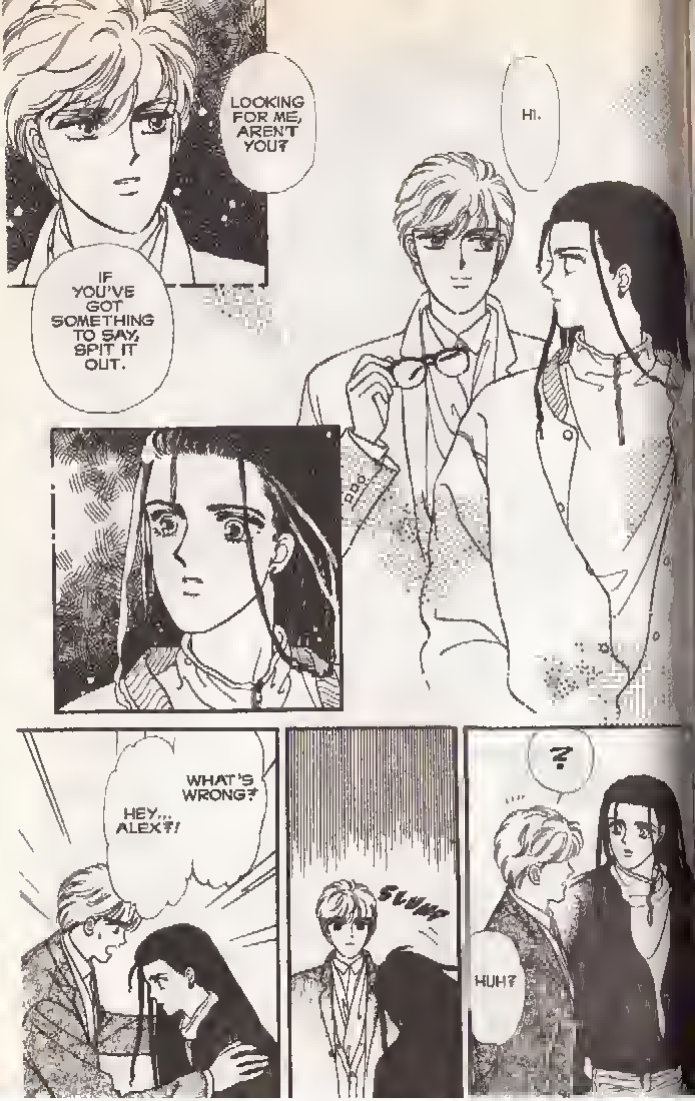

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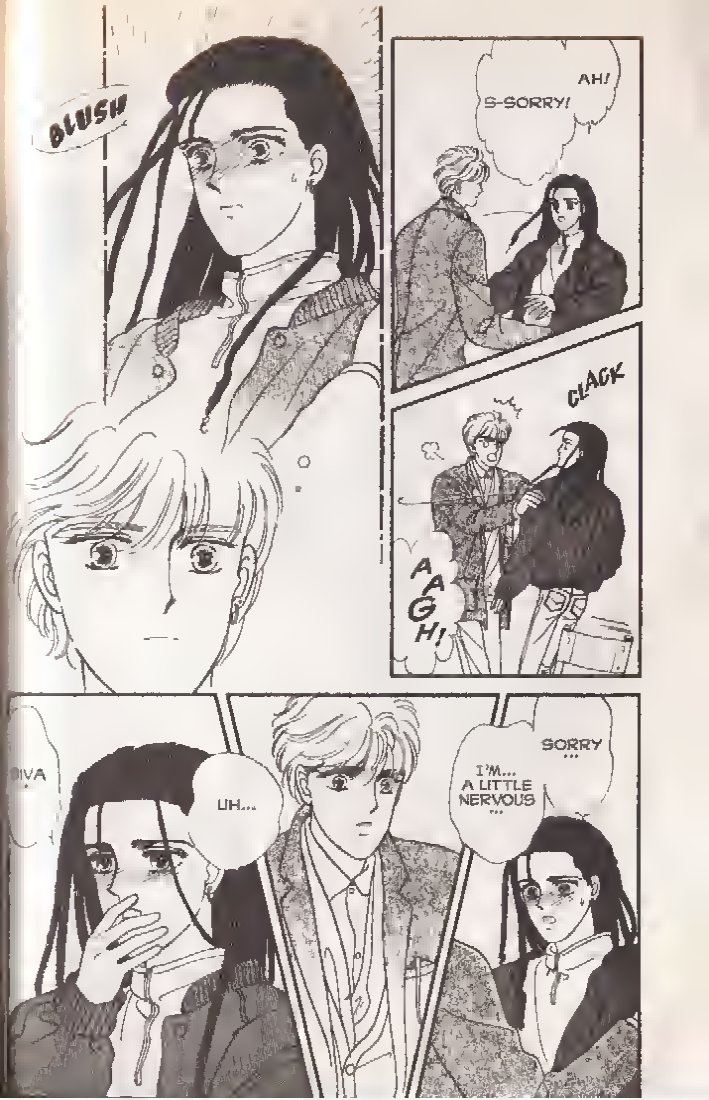

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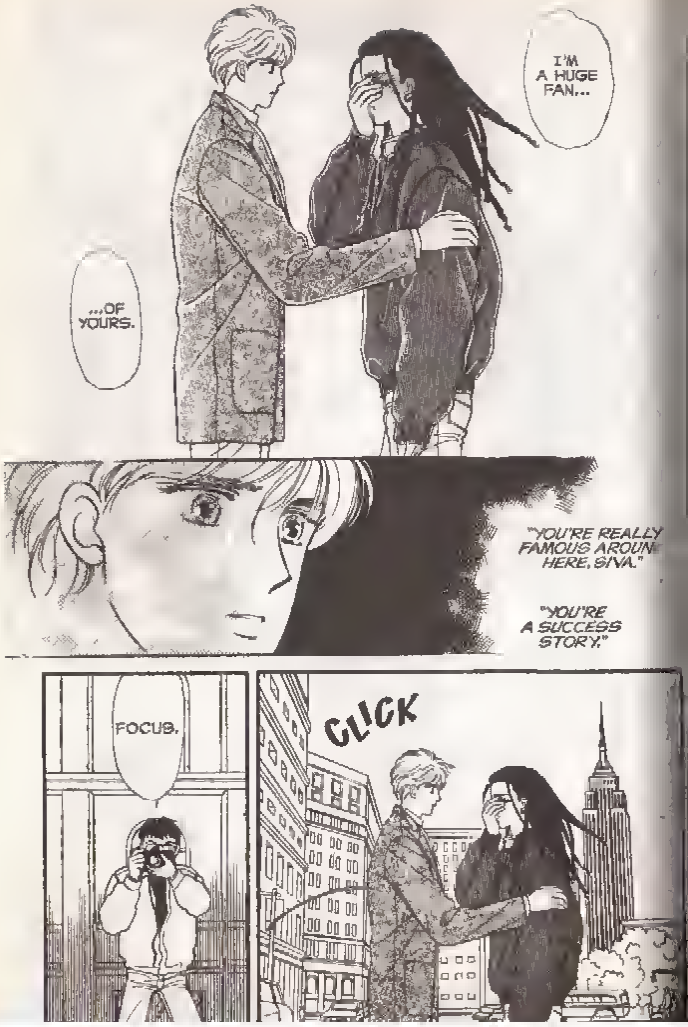

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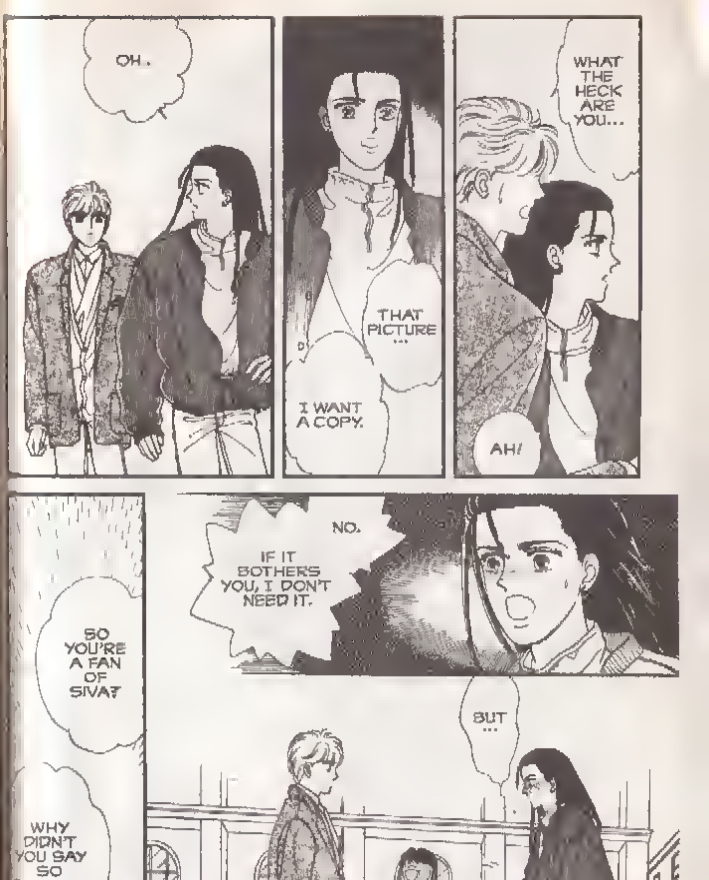

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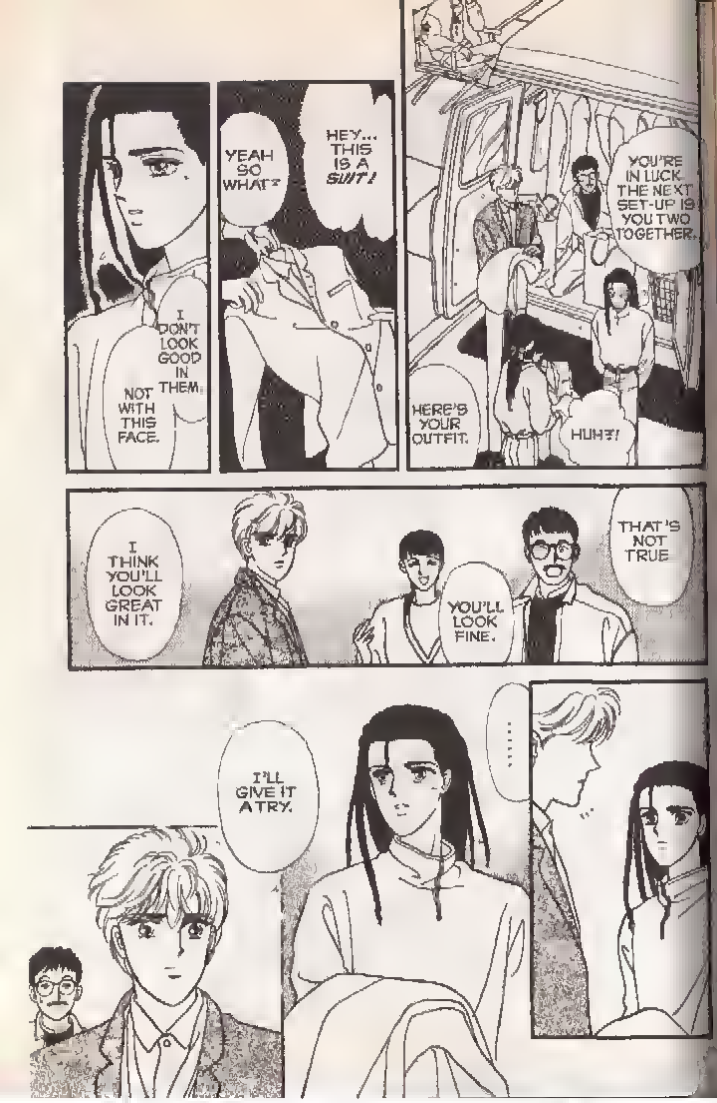
I DON'T LOOK GOOD IN THEM. NOT WITH THIS FACE.
YEAH SO WHAT?
HEY... THIS IS A SUIT!
HERE'S YOUR OUTFIT.
HUH?!
YOU'RE IN LUCK. THE NEXT SET-UP IS YOU TWO TOGETHER.
I THINK YOU'LL LOOK GREAT IN IT.
YOU'LL LOOK FINE.
THAT'S NOT TRUE
I'LL GIVE IT A TRY.
.....

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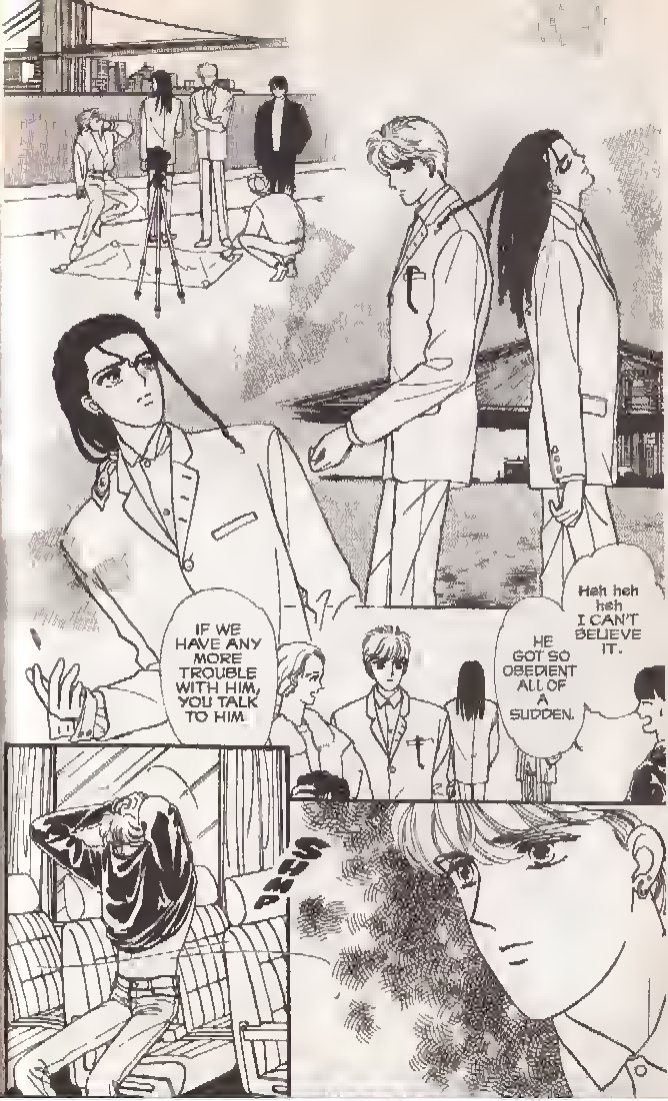

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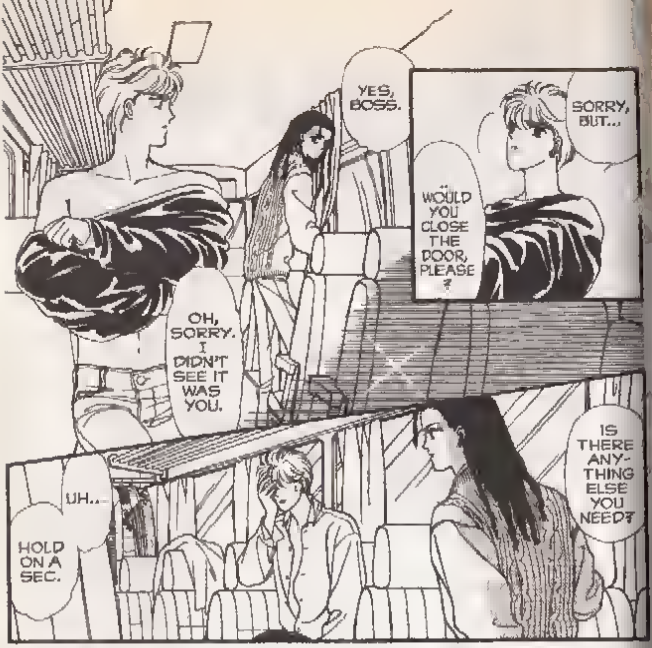
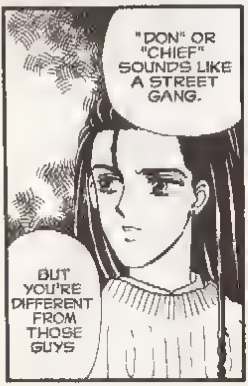

YES, BOSS.
SORRY, BUT...
..WOULD YOU CLOSE THE DOOR, PLEASE?
OH, SORRY. I DIDN'T SEE IT WAS YOU.
IS THERE ANY-THING ELSE YOU NEED?
UH..
HOLD ON A SEC.



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YOU GIVE ME TOO MUCH CREDIT.
I'M NOT AS SPECIAL AS YOU THINK.
I'M JUST AN ORDINARY GUY, LIKE PEOPLE EVERY-WHERE
I'M NOTHING LIKE THE TOUGH, COLD-BLOODED SIVA YOU IMAGINE.
STOP IT. DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.
BUT IT'S THE TRUTH.
I'M JUST A...

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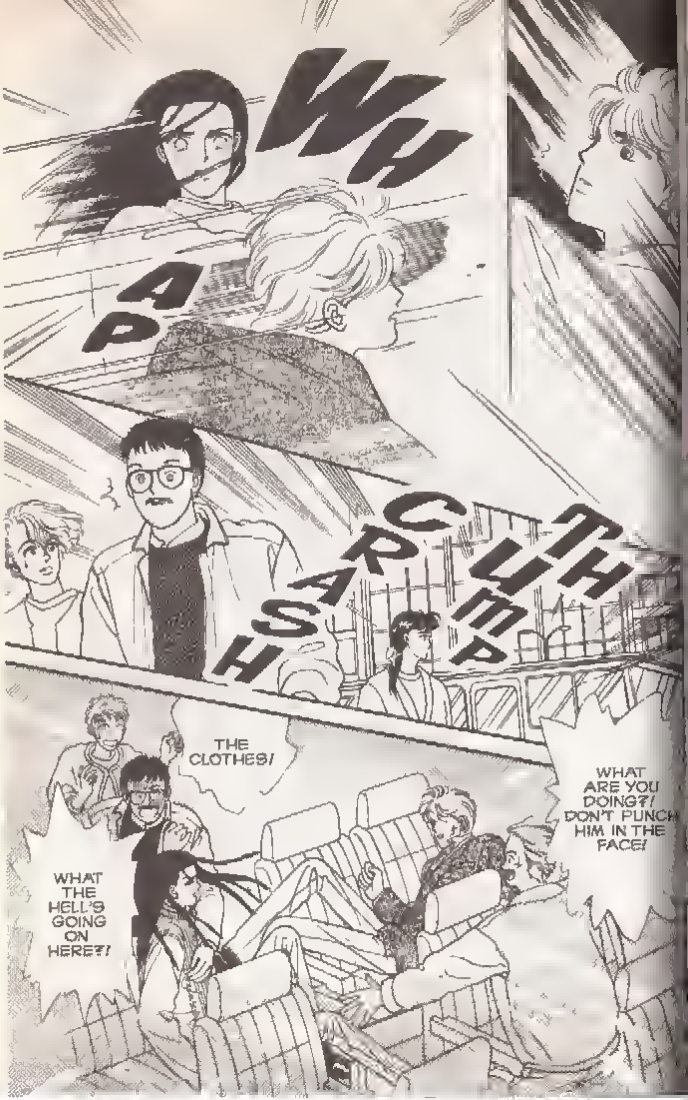

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THE GIRLS WHO READ SHOJO MANGA ARE GOING CRAZY FOR ALEX. BUT THE ONES WHO DON'T READ SHOJO AND THE ADULTS PREFER HAL.
PERSONALLY I THINK BOTH HAVE THEIR DIFFERENT CHARMS, AND I FEEL LIKE I'M WRITING TWO SEPARATE SERIES AT ONCE. HAL'S PLACE IS ACTUALLY MY COUSIN'S HOUSE IN L.A. HIS IS DIRTIER THAN THE REAL THING, BUT THERE REALLY ARE TWIN PALM TREES GROWING OUT IN FRONT. THESE TWO CHARACTERS ARE SO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT IF CIPHER AND SIVA BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER, WHAT KIND OF CONVERSATION WOULD THEY HAVE?
WOW.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A DISASTER.
I JUST CUT MY LIP. IT WASN'T EXACTLY A DISASTER.
EVEN SO...
WHAT A HOT-HEAD.

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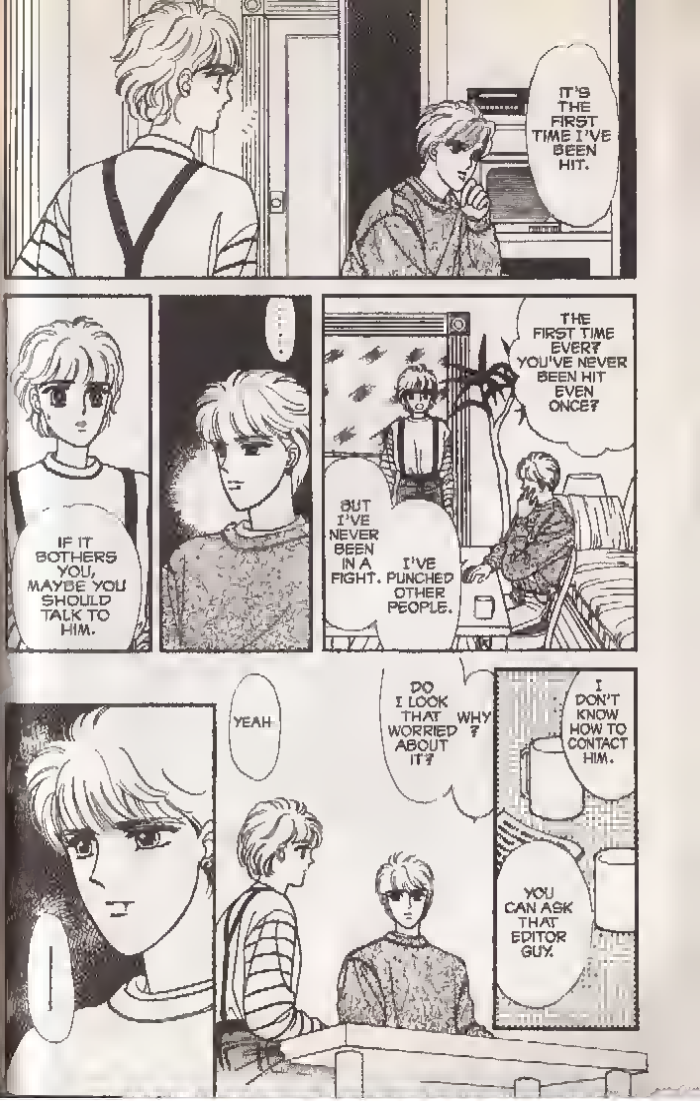
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN HIT.
IF IT BOTHERS YOU, MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO HIM.
THE FIRST TIME EVER? YOU'VE NEVER BEEN HIT EVEN ONCE?
BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A FIGHT.
I'VE PUNCHED OTHER PEOPLE.
YEAH.
DO I LOOK THAT WHY WORRIED ? ABOUT IT?
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CONTACT HIM.
YOU CAN ASK THAT EDITOR GUY.

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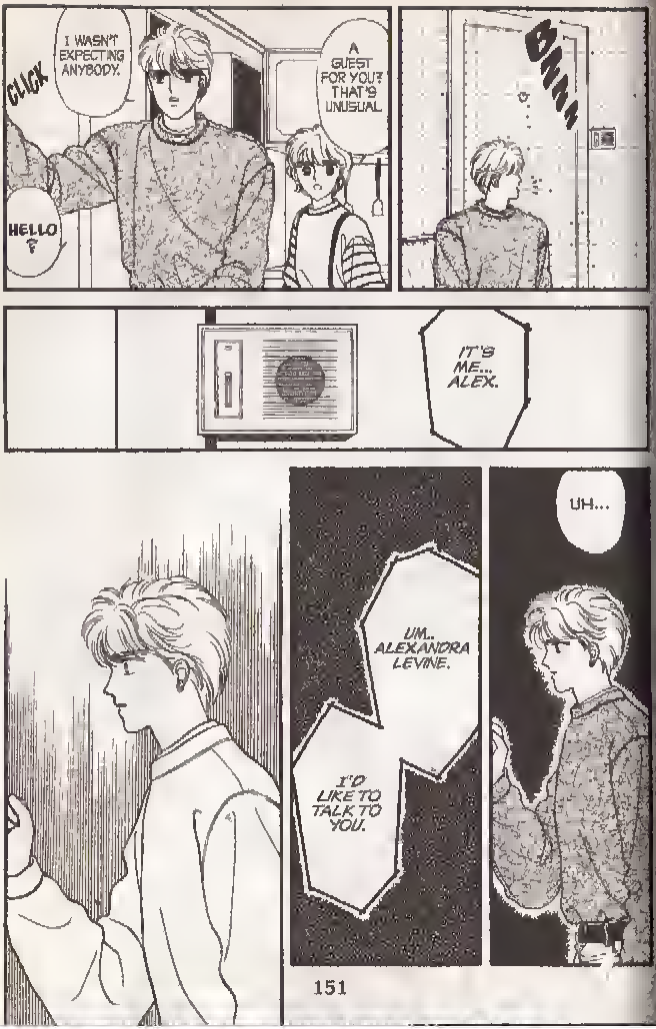

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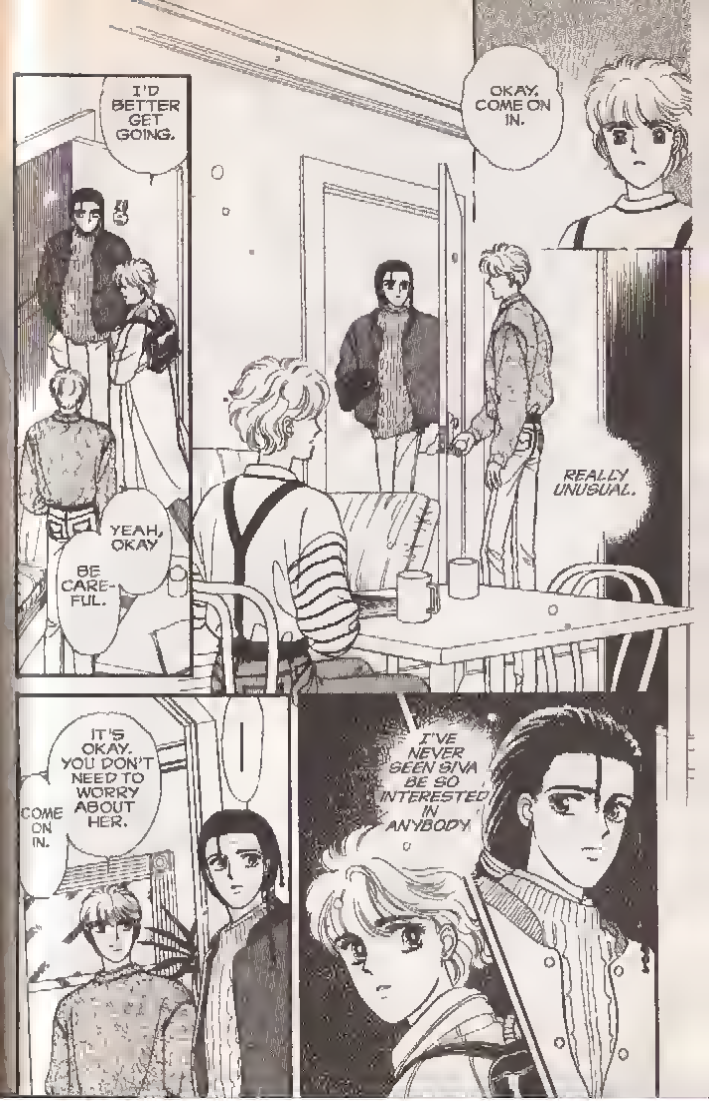
I'D BETTER GET GOING.
OKAY, COME ON IN.
YEAH, OKAY
BE CARE-FUL.
REALLY UNUSUAL.
IT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HER.
COME ON IN.
I'VE NEVER SEEN GINA BE SO INTERESTED IN ANYBODY

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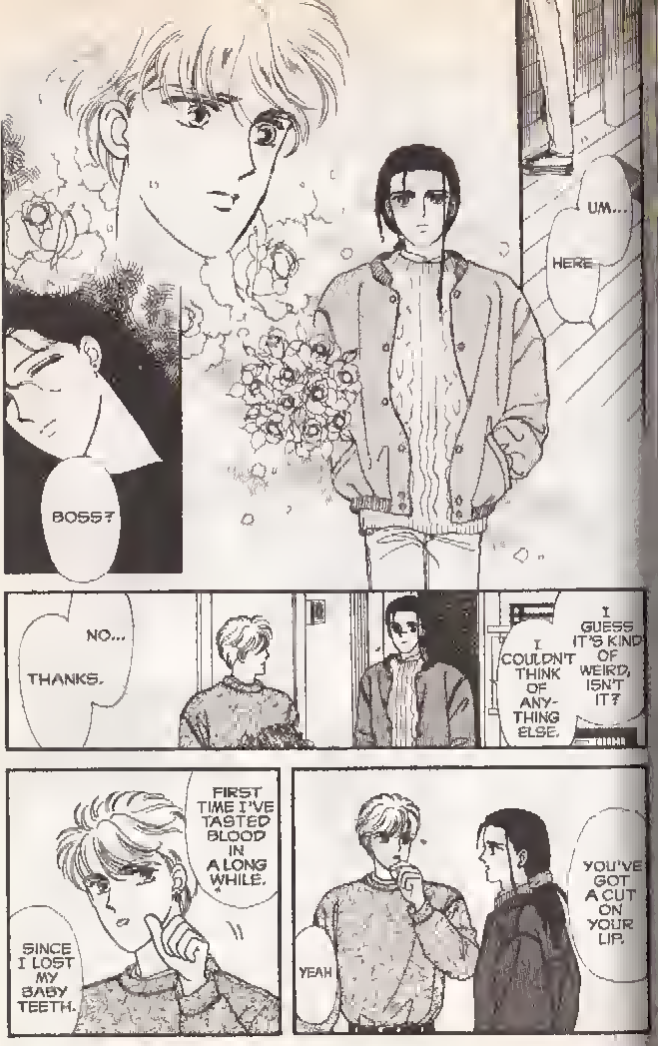

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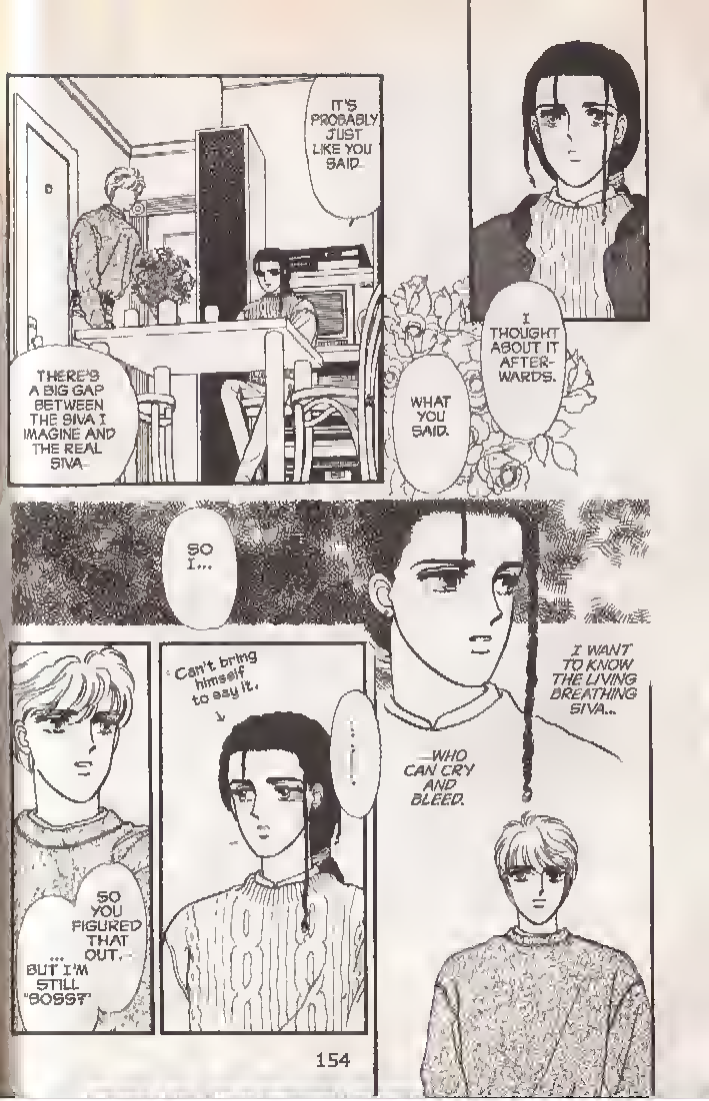
IT'S PROBABLY JUST LIKE YOU SAID.
THERE'S A BIG GAP BETWEEN THE SIVA I IMAGINE AND THE REAL SIVA.
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT AFTER-WARD'S.
WHAT YOU SAID.
SO I...
I WANT TO KNOW THE LIVING BREATHING SIVA...
—WHO CAN CRY AND BLEED.
Can't bring himself to say it.
...
SO YOU FIGURED THAT OUT.
... BUT I'M STILL "BOSS?"

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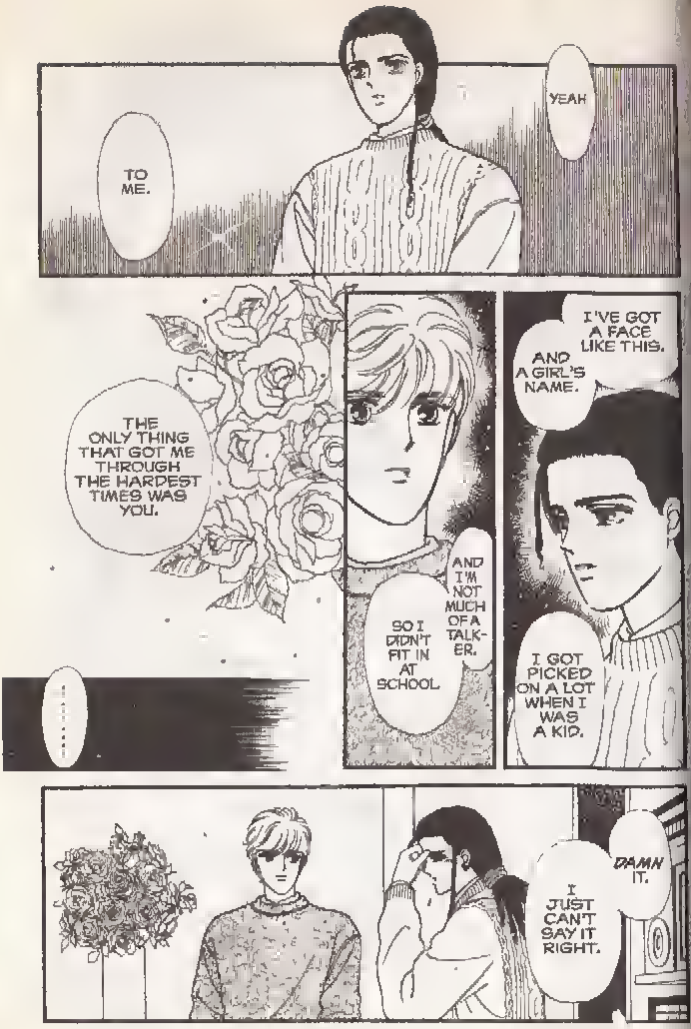
YEAH
TO ME.
I'VE GOT A FACE LIKE THIS.
AND A GIRL'S NAME.
I GOT PICKED ON A LOT WHEN I WAS A KID.
AND I'M NOT MUCH OF A TALK-ER.
SO I DIDN'T FIT IN AT SCHOOL
THE ONLY THING THAT GOT ME THROUGH THE HARDEST TIMES WAS YOU.
DAMN IT.
I JUST CAN'T SAY IT RIGHT.

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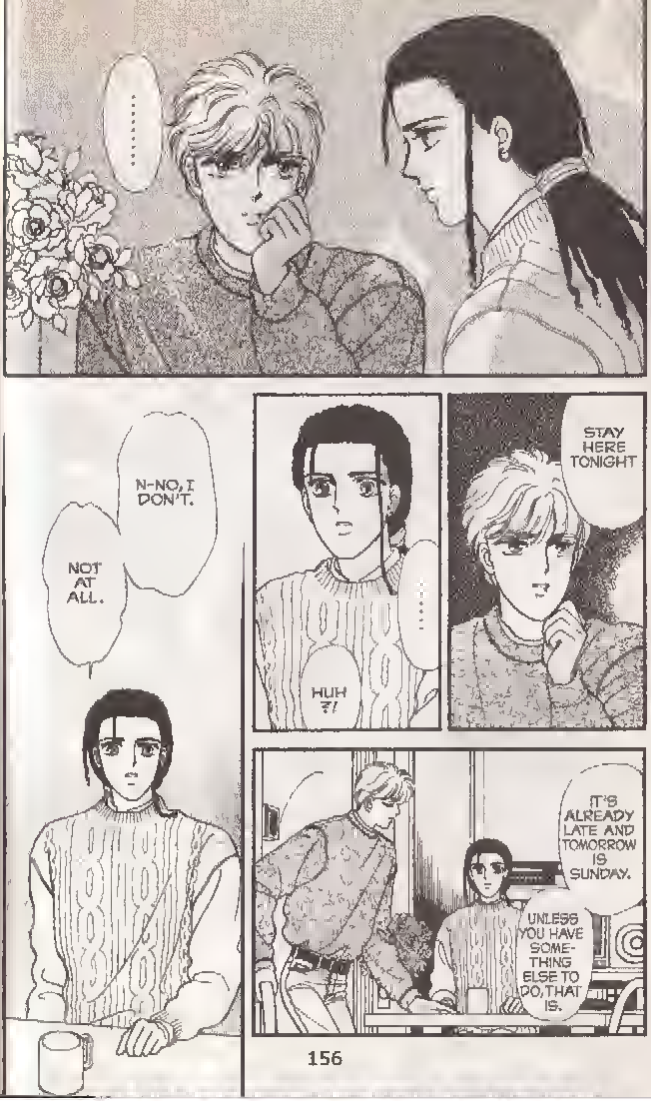

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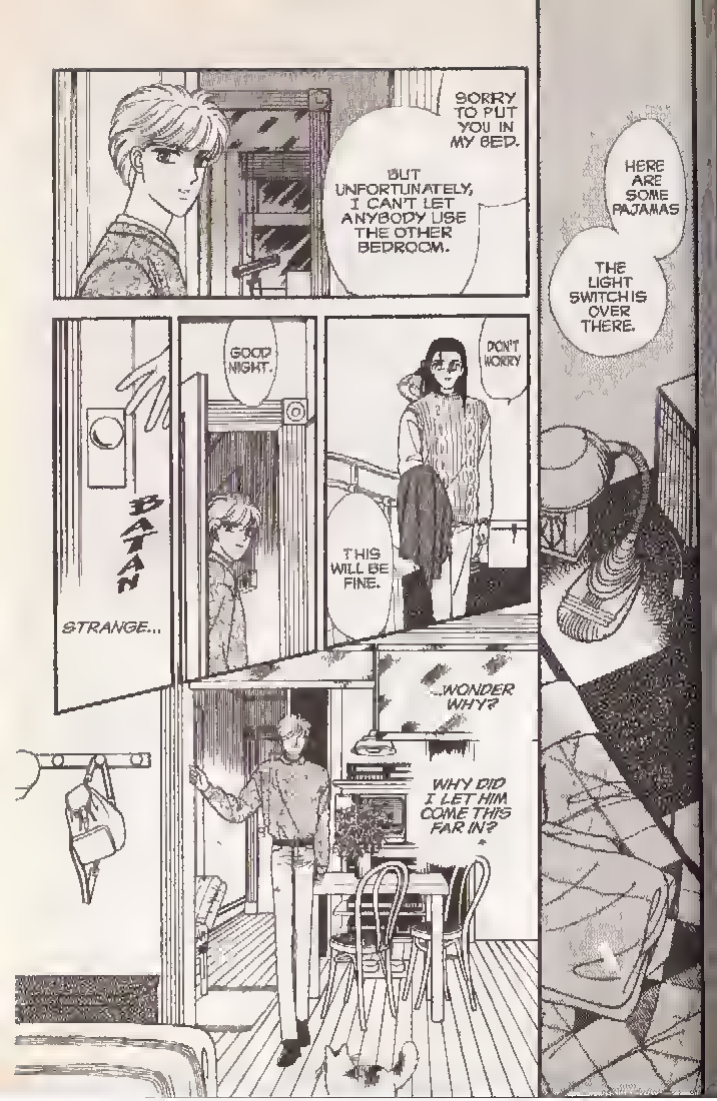
SORRY TO PUT YOU IN MY BED.
BUT UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T LET ANYBODY USE THE OTHER BEDROOM.
HERE ARE SOME PAJAMAS
THE LIGHT SWITCH IS OVER THERE.
GOOD NIGHT.
DON'T WORRY
THIS WILL BE FINE.
BATAN
STRANGE...
...WONDER WHY?
WHY DID I LET HIM COME THIS FAR IN?

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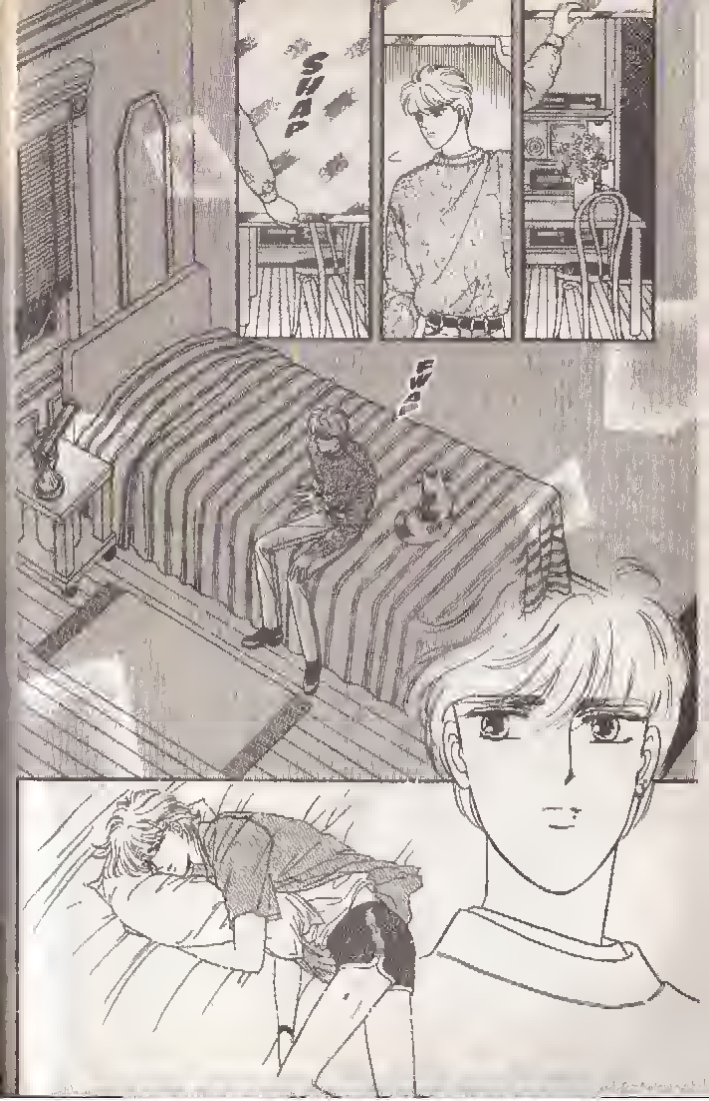

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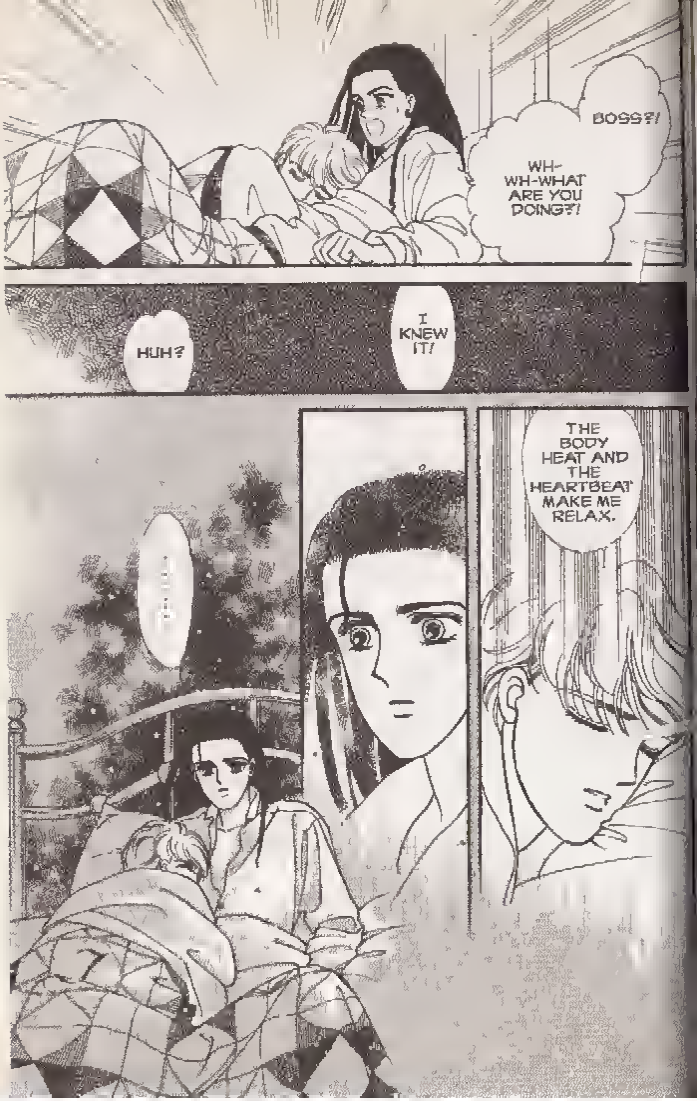

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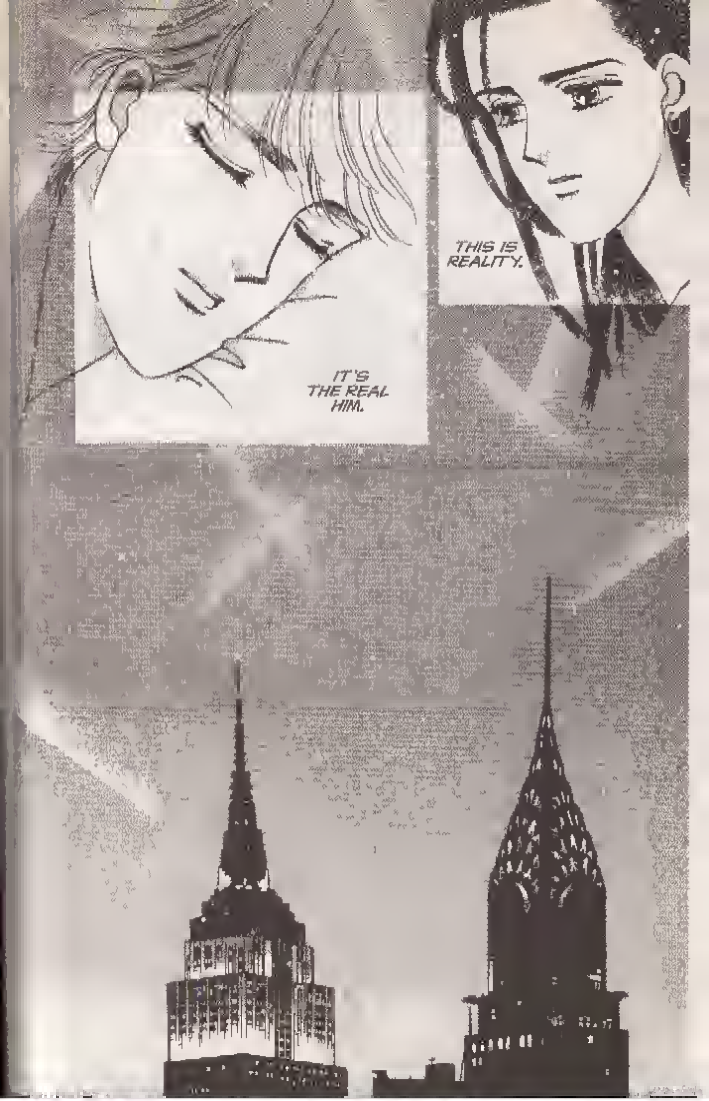

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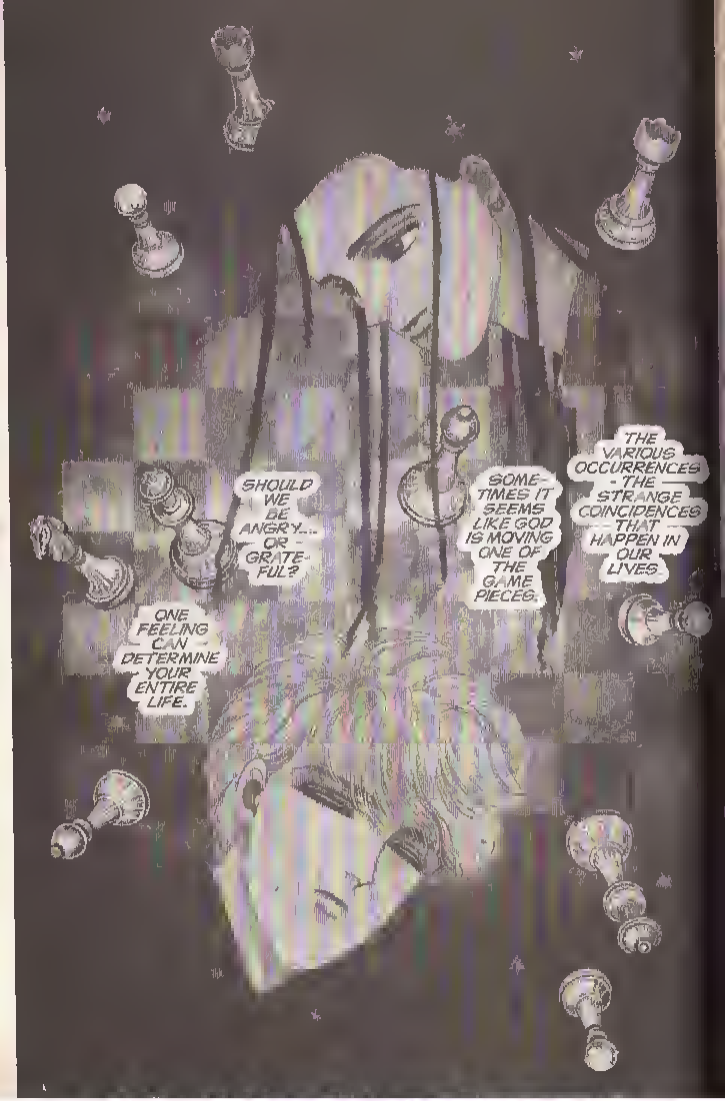
ONE FEELING CAN DETERMINE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE.
SHOULD WE BE ANGRY... OR GRATE-FUL?
SOME-TIMES IT SEEMS LIKE GOD IS MOVING ONE OF THE GAME PIECES.
THE VARIOUS OCCURRENCES - THE STRANGE COINCIDENCES - THAT HAPPEN IN OUR LIVES.

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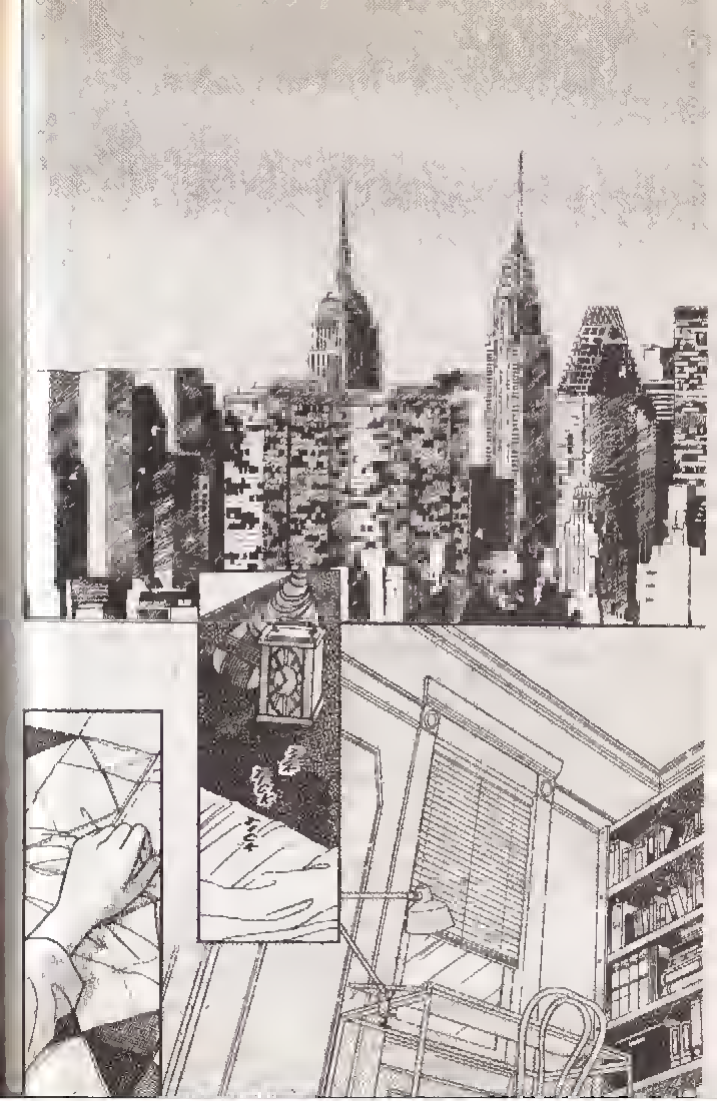

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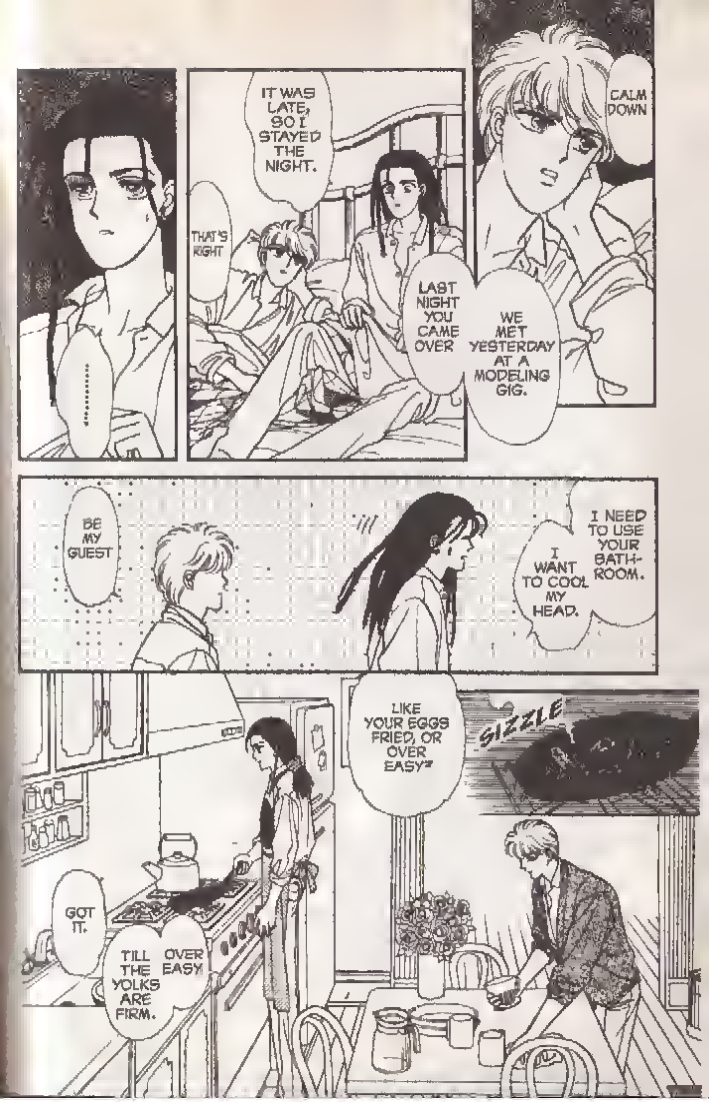
CALM DOWN
WE MET YESTERDAY AT A MODELING GIG.
LAST NIGHT YOU CAME OVER
IT WAS LATE, SO I STAYED THE NIGHT.
THAT'S RIGHT
.....
I NEED TO USE YOUR BATH-ROOM.
I WANT TO COOL MY HEAD.
BE MY GUEST
SIZZLE
LIKE YOUR EGGS FRIED, OR OVER EASY?
GOT IT.
TILL OVER EASY YOLKS ARE FIRM.

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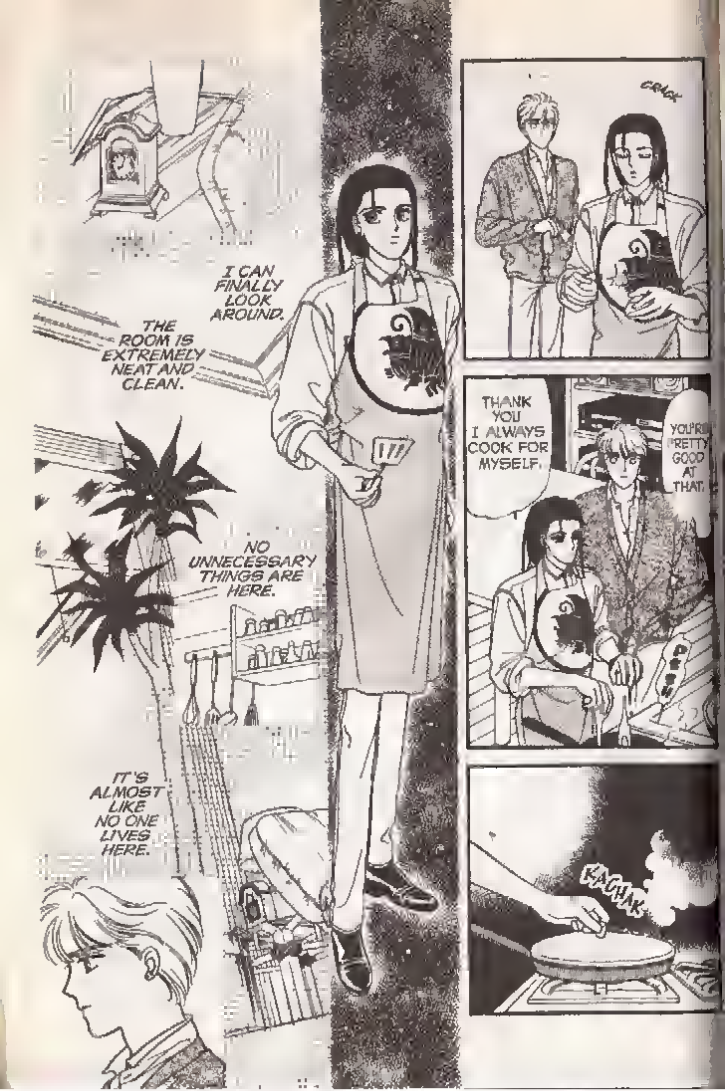
I CAN FINALLY LOOK AROUND.
THE ROOM IS EXTREMELY NEAT AND CLEAN.
NO UNNECESSARY THINGS ARE HERE.
IT'S ALMOST LIKE NO ONE LIVES HERE.
CRACK
THANK YOU I ALWAYS COOK FOR MYSELF.
YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT THAT.
PISH
KACHAK

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I KEPT TALKING ABOUT VARIOUS THINGS UNTIL I WAS SURE YOU WERE COMPLETELY ASLEEP.
OH... THEN THAT PROBABLY WASN'T A DREAM.
YEAH. I HAD GOOD DREAMS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE.
LIKE I COULD HEAR GOD
DID YOU SLEEP WELL LAST NIGHT?
.....
UH-HUH.
THIS MORNING, YOU WOKE UP BEFORE ME, DIDN'T YOU?
R-RARE?
YOU GOT A GIRL-FRIEND, DON'T YOU?
IT'S RARE I HAVE SOMEBODY NEXT TO ME.
SHARE
THERE'S A GIRL I LIKE, BUT...
DOESN'T SHE LIKE YOU?
I WATCHED YOUR SLEEPING FACE FOR A WHILE.
POUR

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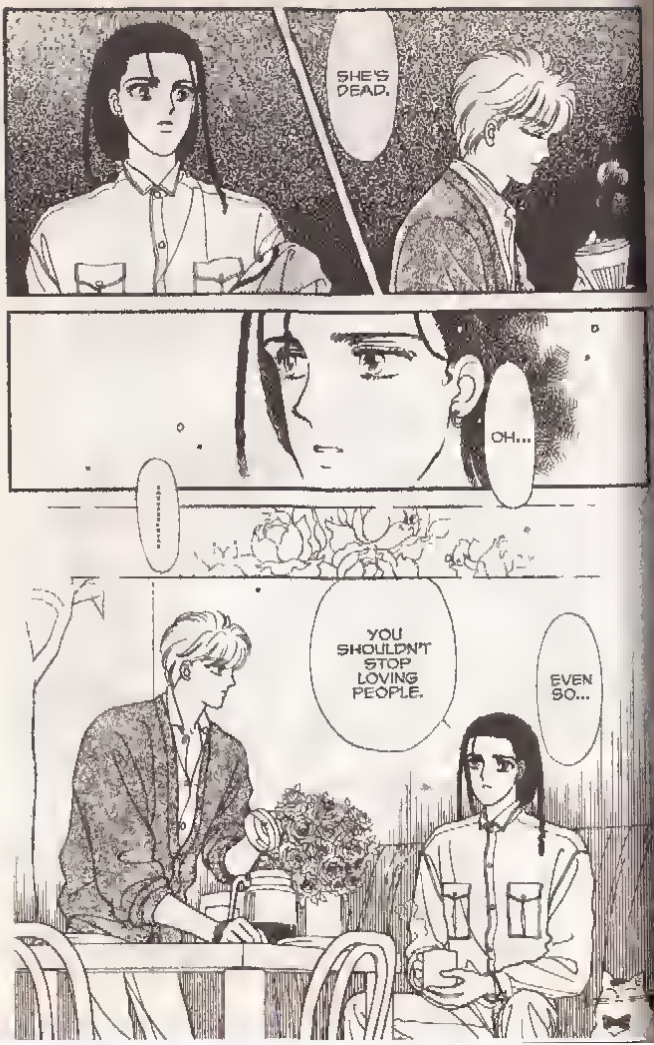

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YOU SOUND LIKE AN OLD LADY.
DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME!
IF YOU TAKE STUFF LIKE THIS LIGHTLY NOW, YOU'LL REGRET IT!
EVERY-ONE SAYS THAT THEY'RE FLEETING AND UNRELI-ABLE...
BUT IN REALITY, THERE'S NOTHING SO UNBUDGABLE AND STUBBORN AS HUMAN FEELINGS!
.....
IS SOME-THING FUNNY?
SIGH
WHA...?!
I DON'T LIKE BEING PREACHED TO.

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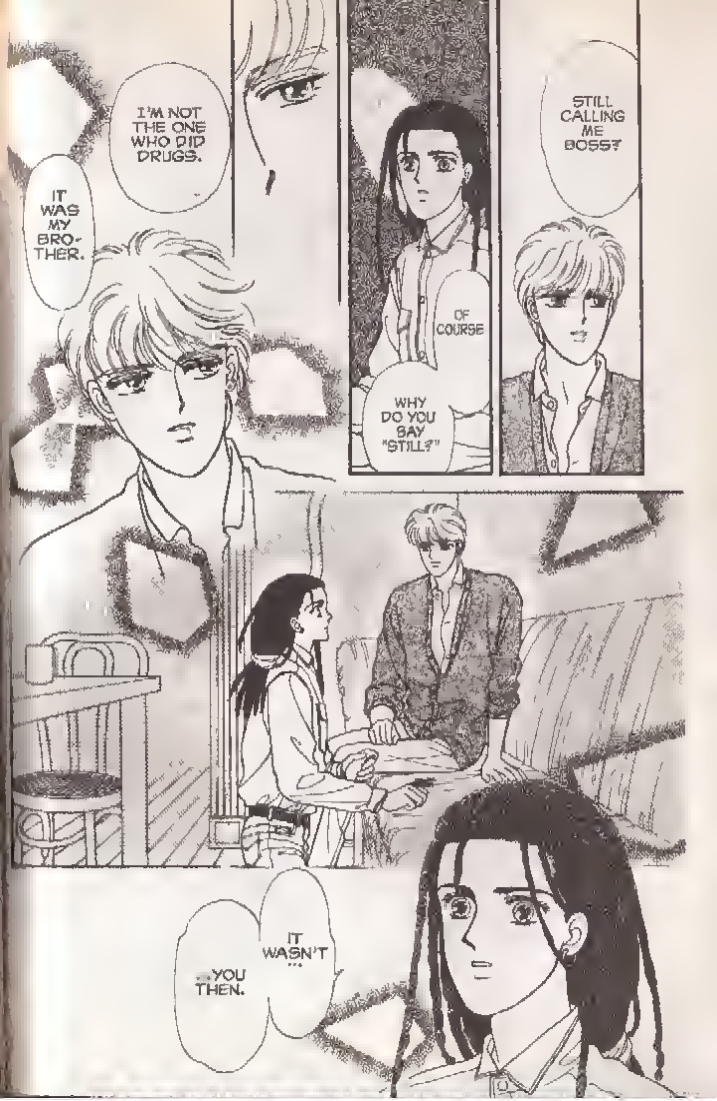

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THE SCRIPT BASED ON THE IRWIN SHAW BOOK--THAT WON THE NATIONAL STUDENT WRITING CONTEST...
THAT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?
AH!
BUT...
HE ISN'T IN NEW YORK ANY-MORE.
SORRY I CAN'T INTRO-DUCE YOU TO HIM.
I LIKE TO WRITE THINGS MYSELF.
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
YOU CONTRIBUTE TO MAGAZINES SOMETIMES, DON'T YOU?

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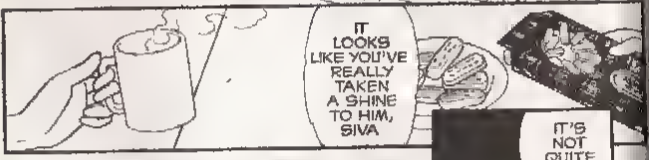

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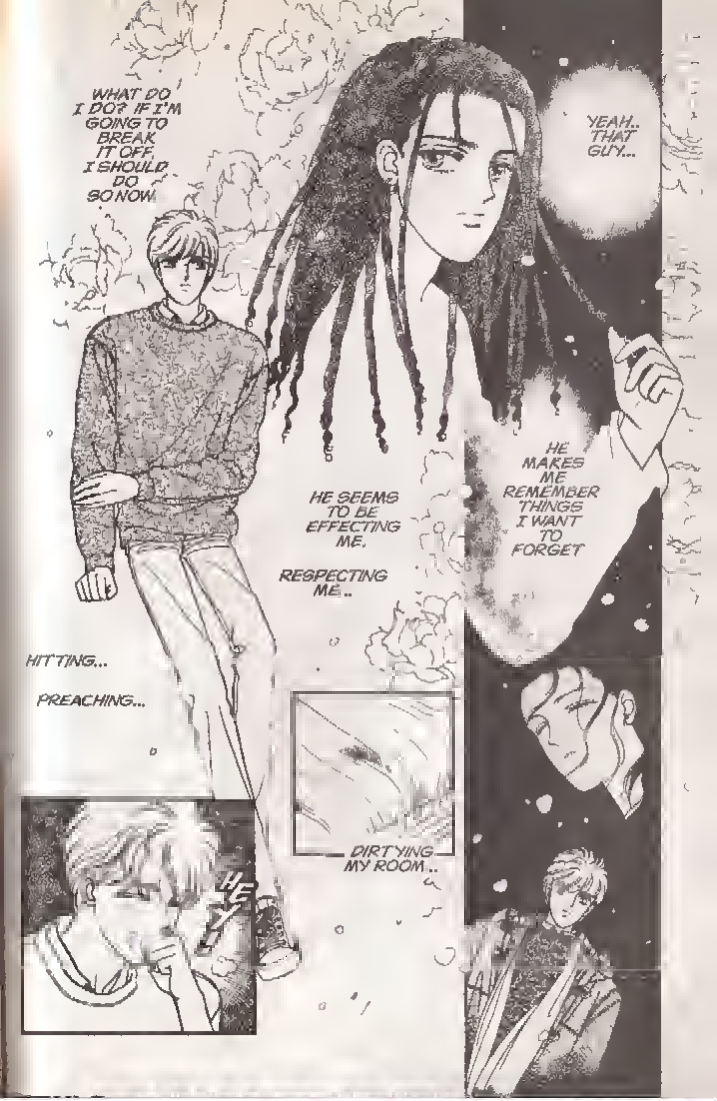
WHAT DO I DO? IF I'M GOING TO BREAK IT OFF, I SHOULD DO SO NOW.
YEAH.. THAT GUY...
HE MAKES ME REMEMBER THINGS I WANT TO FORGET
HE SEEMS TO BE EFFECTING ME,
RESPECTING ME..
HITTING...
PREACHING...
DIRTYING MY ROOM..
HEY

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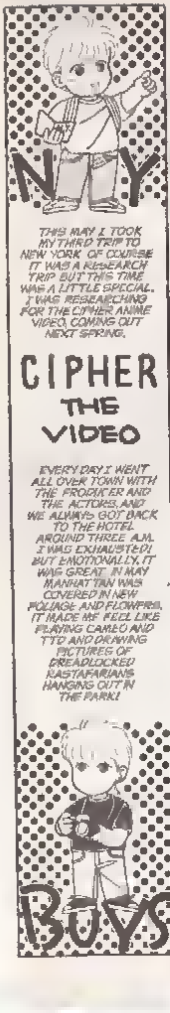
NY
THIS MAY I TOOK MY THIRD TRIP TO NEW YORK. OF COURSE IT WAS A RESEARCH TRIP BUT THIS TIME WAS A LITTLE SPECIAL. I WAS RESEARCHING FOR THE CIPHER ANIME VIDEO, COMING OUT NEXT SPRING.
CIPHER THE VIDEO
EVERY DAY I WENT ALL OVER TOWN WITH THE PRODUCER AND THE ACTORS, AND WE ALWAYS GOT BACK TO THE HOTEL AROUND THREE A.M. I WAS EXHAUSTED, BUT EMOTIONALLY, IT WAS GREAT. IN MAY MANHATTAN WAS COVERED IN NEW FOLIAGE AND FLOWERS, IT MADE ME FEEL LIKE PLAYING CAMEO AND TTD AND DRAWING PICTURES OF DREADLOCKED RASTAFARIANS HANGING OUT IN THE PARK!
BOYS
HELP HELP HELP
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.
BYE, SENSEI.
THANKS A LOT, SENSEI.

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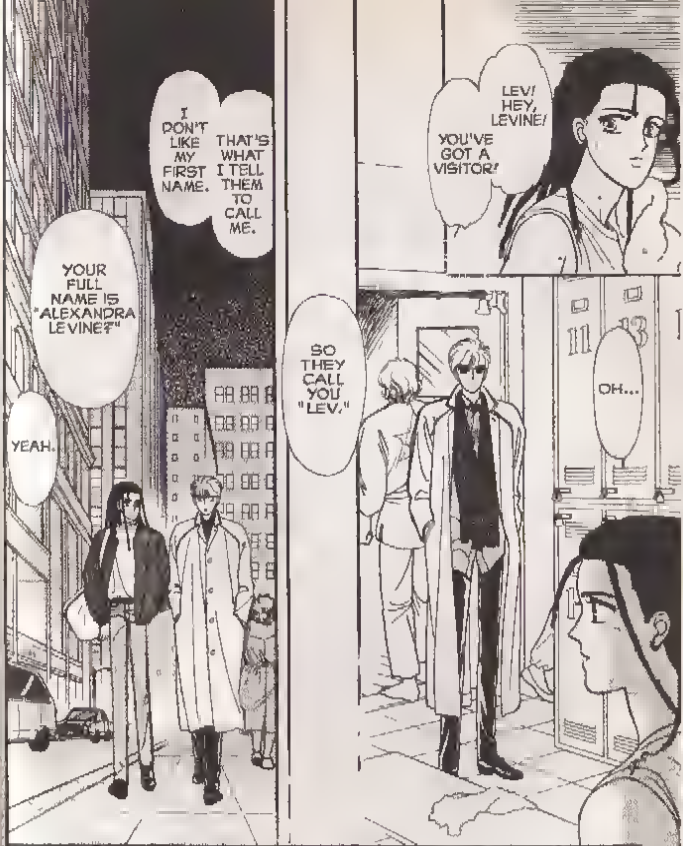
LEV! HEY, LEVINE! YOU'VE GOT A VISITOR!
OH...
SO THEY CALL YOU "LEV."
I DON'T LIKE MY FIRST NAME.
THAT'S WHAT I TELL THEM TO CALL ME.
YOUR FULL NAME IS "ALEXANDRA LEVINE?"
YEAH.
HA! NO WAY
IS YOUR FATHER THE CONDUCTOR AT THE MET?*

*A REFERENCE TO JAMES LEVINE, CONDUCTOR OF THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

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BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR MY ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER.
HOW COME?
TO TELL THE TRUTH, I DIDN'T THINK I'D EVER SEE YOU AGAIN.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ACTUALLY TRACKED ME DOWN.
NONE OF MY FRIENDS KNOW STUFF LIKE THAT.
THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU, BOSS.
I FELT A LITTLE GUILTY LATER ABOUT JUST SHOWING UP AT YOUR PLACE.
PSSH
SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE THAT DAY.
I WOULDN'T TELL IF MY LIFE DEPENDED ON IT.
YOUR TRUST IN ME IS RIDING ON IT.
GASHA
I APPRECIATE IT IF YOU DIDN'T TELL ANYBODY.
OH, SPEAKING OF WHICH...
OF COURSE!

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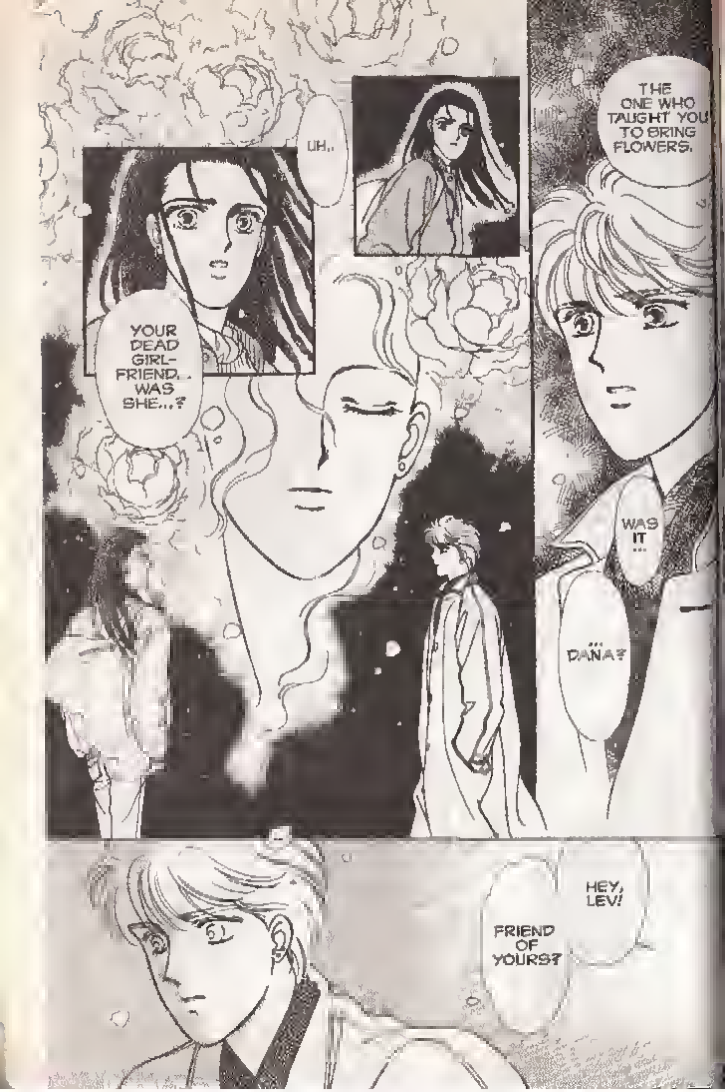

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BOSS! DON'T RUN WAY!
I'M NOT RUNNING AWAY!
DID HER WATER BREAK? HOW LONG AGO?
MAYBE THIRTY MINUTES AGO...
THEN COME ON!
THEY NEED OUR HELP!
I CALLED OTIS AT HIS JOB!

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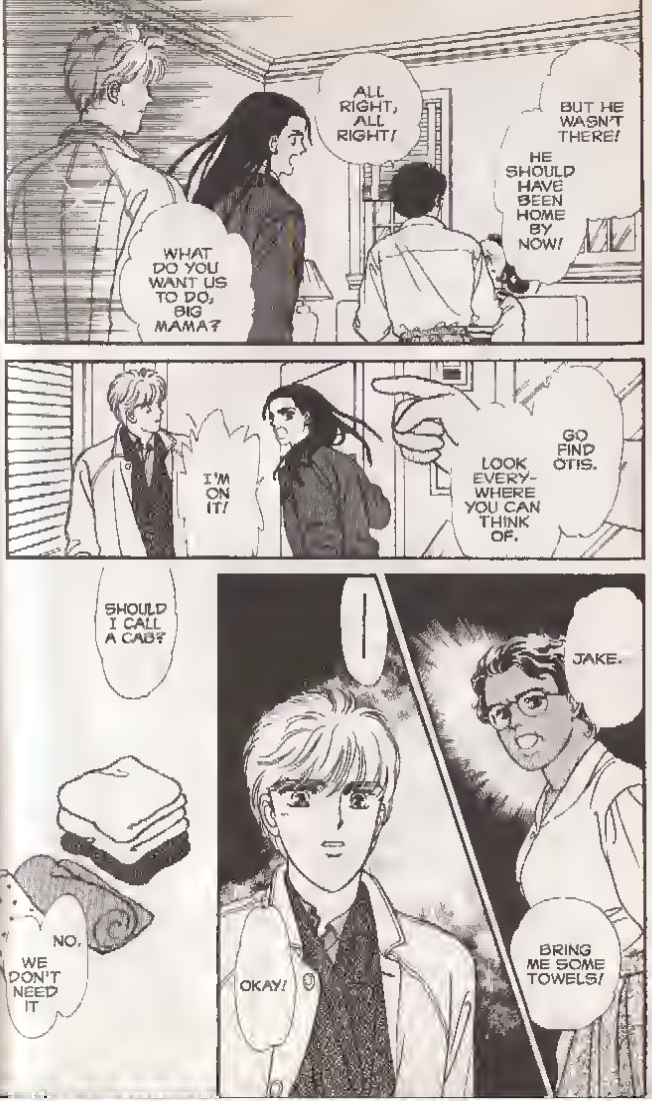
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!
BUT HE WASN'T THERE!
HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HOME BY NOW!
WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO, BIG MAMA?
I'M ON IT!
GO FIND OTIS.
LOOK EVERY-WHERE YOU CAN THINK OF.
SHOULD I CALL A CAB?
JAKE.
NO. WE DON'T NEED IT
OKAY!
BRING ME SOME TOWELS!

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BUT JUST WHEN I NEED HER HUSBAND THE MOST, HE'S NOT HERE.
WHAT... YOU MEAN HAVE IT HERE?!
HER HUSBAND'S BEEN GOING TO LECTURES AT THE HOSPITAL. RECENTLY THERE'S A TREND TO HAVE BABIES AT HOME.
IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN ANY DAY NOW. HE'LL COME HOME SOON!
EITHER WAY...
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO HANDLE THIS OURSELVES.

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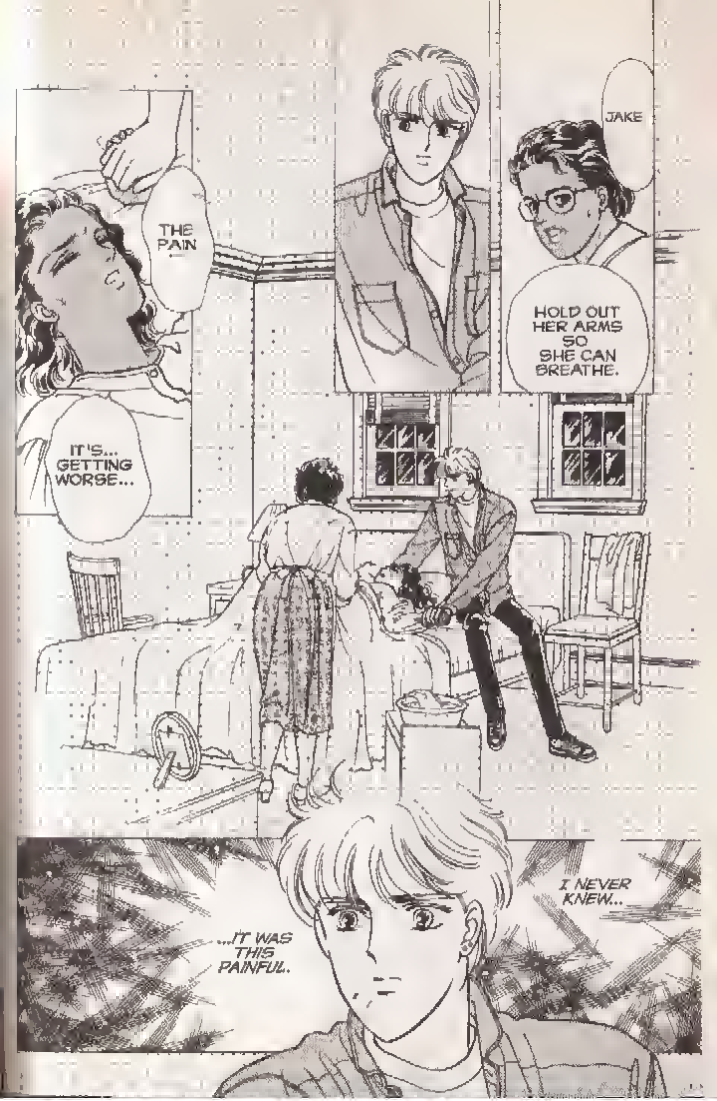

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BIG MAMA! HERE'S OTIS!
THERE ... THERE IT IS.
I CAN SEE THE HEAD!
PATTY!
HURRY UP AND GET OVER HERE!
GOT IT!
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, BOYS.
WE'RE OKAY FROM HERE. GO GET SOME WARM WATER TO WASH THE BABY.
PATTY'S PRETTY CUTE, ISN'T SHE?
SHUT UP.
Secretly thinking the same thing.

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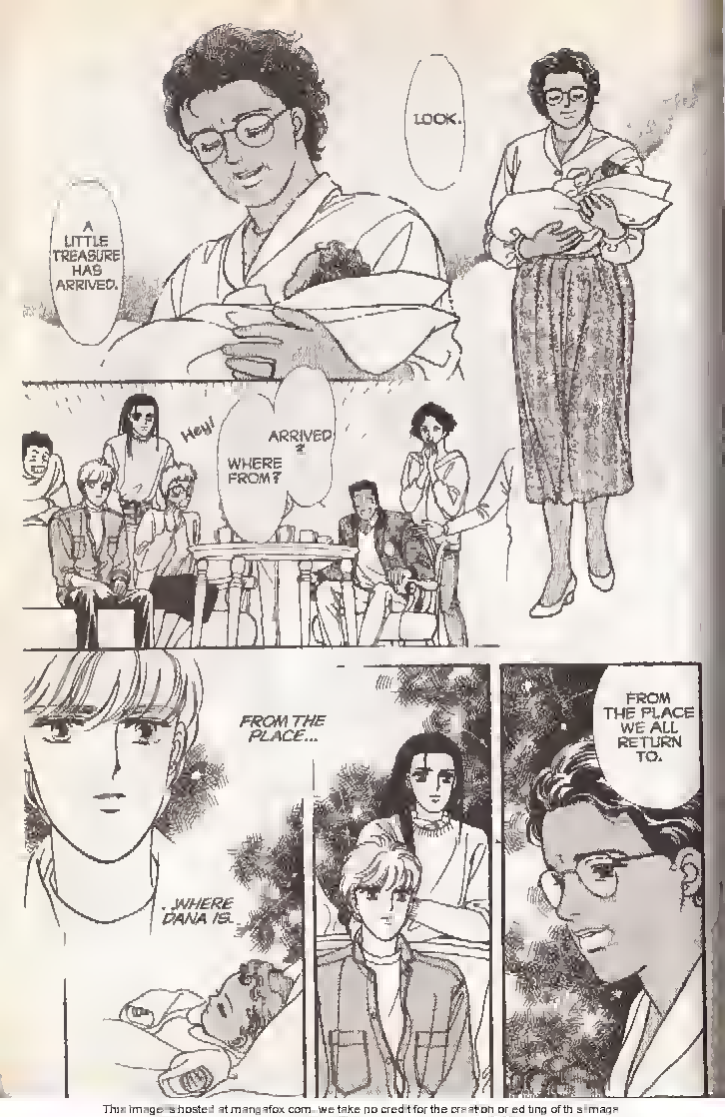

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IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, BIG MAMA, I WON'T DO IT.
BUT IF YOU'LL ALLOW IT...
SO, OTIS...
HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF A NAME?
DO YOU MIND IF I NAME HER DANA?
BIG MAMA
DANA WAS SO WONDER-FUL.
AND EVERY-BODY LOVED HER.
I WANT HER TO GROW UP LIKE THAT.
NO, IT'S NOT GOOD.
TAKEN AWAY SO YOUNG...THAT NAME IS PROBABLY BAD LUCK.

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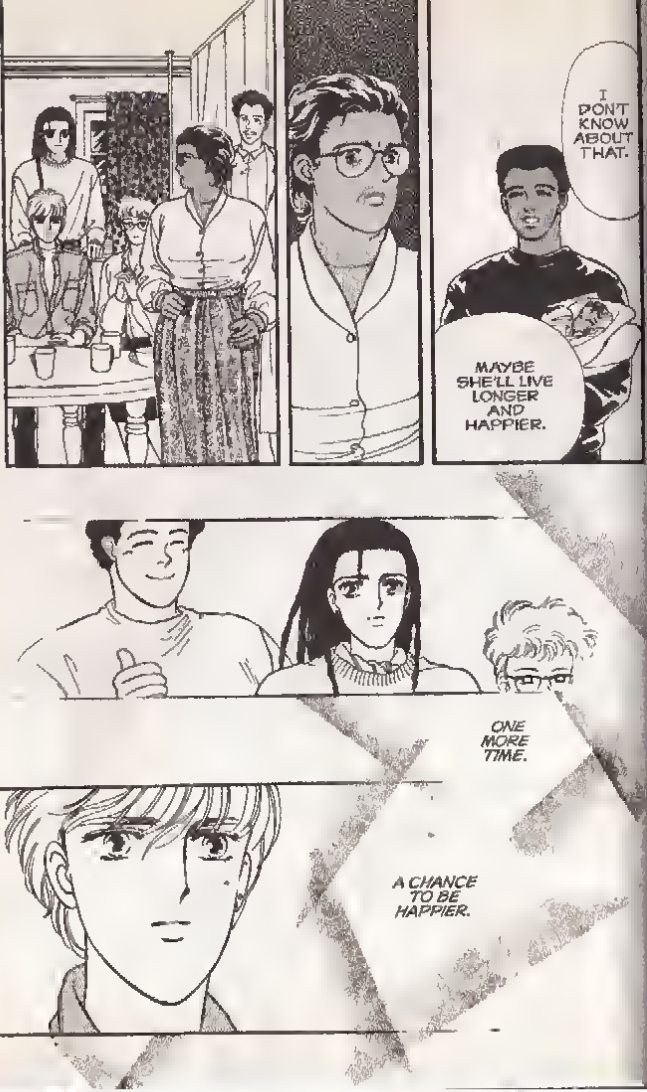

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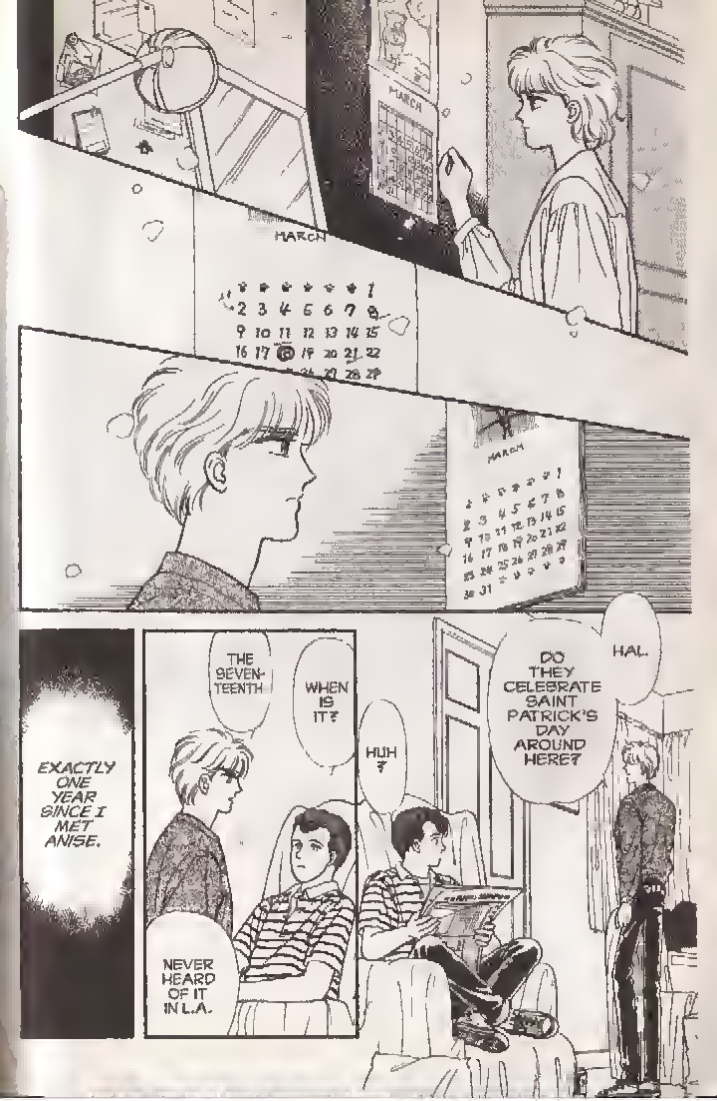

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FIND OUT HOW CIPHER SETTLES IN TO HIS NEW LIFE IN L.A.! AVAILABLE IN JULY!

By Minako Narita. Cipher and his new roommate Haru seem to get along fine, although their different styles make them something like "The Odd Couple." When Cipher tells the story of his previous life with his twin brother and how orderly their existence was, Haru takes this as his cue to bring out Cipher's wilder side!

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